A post-syntactic approach to complementizer agreement

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1. Introduction

- <u>Well-known fact</u>: in many non-standard varieties of Germanic, we can observe instances of multiple agreement where the subject's ϕ-features are reflected not only on the verb, but also on C^0 (or some head of a split-C structure):[1]

(1) a. da-n=k   ik werk-en   *West Flemish*
          that-1SG=CLIT.1SG I   work-1SG
          'that I work'
      b. da-t=ze   zie   werk-t
          that-3SG=CLIT.3SG.FEM she work-3SG
          'that she works'

(2) dat-st   do jûn   kom-st   *Frisian*
      that-2SG you tonight come-2SG
      'that you come tonight'

(3) a. ob-st   du noch Minga   kumm-st   *Bavarian*
          whether-2SG you to   Munich come-2SG
          '...whether you come to Munich'
      b. ob-ts   ihr noch Minga   kumm-ts
          whether-2PL you to   Munich come-2PL
          '...whether you (pl) come to Munich'

- <u>Questions</u>:
  (i) How are the relevant inflectional features structurally represented?
  (ii) How are these features licensed/evaluated?

- <u>Prevalent in the literature</u>: syntactic approaches, e.g. movement of an inflectional head to C^0 (Hoekstra & Marácz 1989, Zwart 1993, 1997), the presence of a separate AgrP in the C-domain, the content of which is licensed via spec-head agreement (Roberts 1994, Shlonsky 1994), or the presence of a ϕ-set on C^0 which initiates an AGREE operation accessing the subject in SpecTP (Carstens 2003).

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[1] Cf. Bayer (1984), Altmann (1984), Weiß (1998, to appear), on Bavarian; Bennis & Haegeman (1984), Haegeman (1990), (1992), Shlonsky (1994), de Vogelaer et al. (2002) on (West) Flemish; de Haan & Weerman (1986), Hoekstra & Marácz (1989) on Frisian; Zwart (1993), (1997) on dialects of the eastern and southern Netherlands; Hoekstra & Smits (1999) for an overview. Note that only West Flemish exhibits a full paradigm; in other varieties complementizer agreement is usually restricted to certain person/number combinations (Bavarian: 2nd person (and 1pl in some varieties), eastern dialects of Dutch: 1pl, southern dialects: 1pl and 3pl, Frisian: 2sg (plus 2pl in some varieties). See Fuß (to appear) for a diachronic explanation of the person/number restrictions found in Bavarian.

- Basic claims:
  - (i) complementizer agreement is established in the post-syntactic components of grammar/the mapping to PF (see Ackema & Neeleman 2004 for related proposals).
  - (ii) complementizer agreement does not involve a dependency between C and the subject, but rather between C and the finite verb.
  - (iii) complementizer agreement results from the post-syntactic insertion of an agreement morpheme (in C) which is parasitic on the presence of another agreement morpheme (in T) that has been evaluated in the syntax.

2. Problems for syntactic accounts

2.1 Adjacency effects

- Observation: in dialects where the shape of complementizer agreement differs from the shape of verbal agreement, the former replaces the latter in inversion contexts, cf. the following examples from the Dutch dialect Hellendoorn (Ackema & Neeleman 2003, 2004):

(4) datt-e   wiej noar't park loop-t
     that-1PL we   to-the park walk-1PL
     'that we are walking to the park'

(5) a. Wiej loop-t   noar't park.
        we   walk-1PL to-the park
        'We are walking to the park.'
     b. Volgens   miej lop-e   wiej noar't park.
        according-to me   walk-1PL we   to-the park
        'According to me we are walking to the park.'

- The presence of an (scrambled) adjunct which intervenes between C^0 and the subject blocks the availability of complementizer agreement. This restriction holds for both main and embedded clauses:

(6) a. dat/*datt-e   [op den wärmsten dag van't joar]
        that/that-1PL on   the warmest   day of-the year
        wiej tegen   oonze wil   ewärkt hebt.
        we   against our   will worked have
        'that on the warmest day of the year we have worked against our will'
     b. Volgens   miej loop-t/*lop-e   [op den wärmsten dag
        according-to me   walk-1PL/walk-1PL   on   the warmest   day
        van't joar] ook   wiej noar't park.
        of-the year also we   to-the park
        'According to me we are also walking to the park on the warmest day of the year.'

- Similar adjacency effects can be observed in other Germanic varieties which exhibit complementizer agreement, cf. the following examples from Bavarian:[2]

(7) a. *obwoi-st   [woartscheints] du   ins   Kino   ganga   bist
      although-2SG   probably   you   to-the movies gone   are
      'although you probably to the movies'
   b. obwoi   [woartscheints] du   ins   Kino   ganga   bist
      although probably   you   to-the movies gone   are
      'although you probably went to the movies'
      (Bavarian; Günther Grewendorf, p.c.)

Infl-to-C movement?

- This adjacency effect is completely unexpected in an approach based on INFL-to-C movement (Hoekstra & Marácz 1989, Zwart 1993a,b, 1997): in general, the presence of an intervening XP should not block X^0-movement. Even worse, complementizer agreement is not available in examples such as (6b) where exactly this operation has taken place!

Spec-head?

- <u>Shlonsky (1994)</u>: the inflection found in the C-domain is licensed in a specifier-head relation between a separate AgrC-head and the subject which moves to SpecAgrCP. Subsequently, $AgrC^0$ moves to C^0, leading to inflected complementizers (see Roberts 1994 for a related proposal):

(8)   [$_{C'}$ that+AgrC [$_{AgrCP}$ subject [$_{AgrC'}$ t$_{AgrC}$ [$_{IP}$ PP [$_{IP}$ t$_{subject}$ ...]]]]]

- Strict adjacency between inflected C and the subject (in SpecAgrCP) is ensured by a stipulation ruling out adjunction to AgrCP (p. 360).[3]

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[2] West Flemish and Frisian always require strict adjacency between the (inflected) complementizer and the subject. That is, violations of the adjacency requirement lead to ungrammaticality and not to non-inflected complementizers (Liliane Haegeman, Germen de Haan, p.c.):
(i) a. *da-n   [morgen]   Pol en Valère   werk-en   (*West Flemish*)
       that-3PL tomorrow   Pol and Valerie work-3PL
    b. *da [morgen]   Pol en Valère   werk-en
       that tomorrow   Pol and Valerie work-3PL
       'that Pol and Valerie are working tomorrow'
(ii) a. *hy leaude   datst   [moarn]   do   komme soest.   (*Frisian*)
       he believed that-2SG tomorrow you come   should-2SG
     b. *hy leaude   dat [moarn]   do   komme soest.
       he believed that tomorrow you come   should-2SG
However, at least in Frisian, non-inflected complementizers are possible in cases of embedded V2:
(iii) hy leaude   datsto   moarn   komme soest.
     he believed that-2SG-you tomorrow   come   should-2SG
(iv) hy leaude   dat do soest   moarn   komme.
     he believed that you should-2SG tomorrow come
(v) *hy leaude   datsto   soest   moarn   komme.
     he believed that-2SG-you should-2SG tomorrow   come
     'He believed that you should come tomorrow.'
[3] Note that examples with an intervening PP (and without complementizer agreement) must then be attributed to a completely different structure lacking a separate AgrCP:
(i)   [$_{C'}$ that [$_{IP}$ PP [$_{IP}$ subject ...]]]

AGREE?

- Carstens (2003): C hosts its own set of uninterpretable ϕ-features which is valued under closest c-command (i.e., AGREE) by the interpretable ϕ-features of the subject in SpecTP.

- Carstens' analysis of adjacency effects: intervention effect in the sense of Chomsky (2000, 2001). By assumption, the intervening adverbial bears a Case feature that identifies the adverbial as a possible goal for the ϕ-set in C^0. As a consequence, the adverbial "disrupts closest c-command of the subject by C^0" (p. 398), thereby blocking the evaluation and realization of complementizer agreement:

(9) $[_{C'}$ C $[_{TP}$ PP $[_{TP}$ subject ...]]]
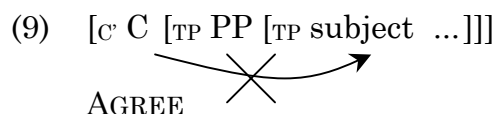
AGREE

- Problems: (i) non-standard assumptions (PP adverbials carry a Case feature); (ii) false predictions: adverbials that intervene between T^0 and the base position of the subject are expected to block the realization of subject-verb agreement:

(10) $[_{T'}$ T$[_{vP}$ adv $[_{vP}$ subject ...]]]
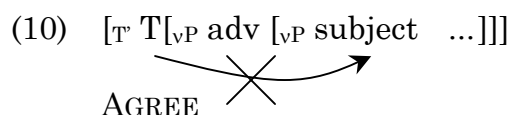
AGREE

> Preliminary conclusions: (i) analysis in terms of head movement cannot account for the facts; (ii) under a spec-head analysis, the problematic data can only be ruled out by a stipulation (no adjunction to AgrCP); (iii) Agree-type analysis has to rely on ad-hoc assumptions and leads to wrong predictions.

2.2 Sluicing

- Bavarian: complementizer agreement is blocked in sluicing constructions, that is, cases where an IP within a *wh*-CP is elided (cf. Lobeck 1995: 59):

(11) a. I woass dass-ts ihr a Madl gseng hoabts,
        I know that-2PL you a girl seen have-2PL
        owa I woass net wo-ts ihr a Madl gseng hoabts.
        but I know not where-2PL you a girl seen have-2pl)
      b. I woass dass-ts ihr a Madl gseng hoabts,
        I know that-2PL you a girl seen has-2PL
        owa I woass net wo (*-ts) ~~ihr a Madl gseng hoabts~~.
        but I know not where -2PL (you a girl seen have-2pl)
        'I know that you've seen a girl, but I don't know where (you've seen a girl).'
        (Günther Grewendorf, p.c.)

- Under the common assumption that sluicing is to be analyzed in terms of PF-deletion (Ross 1969, Lasnik 2001, Merchant 2001), (11) indicates that the

realization of complementizer agreement is sensitive to post-syntactic operations. This fact cannot be accounted for if it is assumed that complementizer agreement is established by purely syntactic mechanisms.[4]

3. Toward a post-syntactic account of complementizer agreement

- Ackema & Neeleman (2004) propose an analysis of complementizer agreement in terms of a PF feature checking rule which applies if C and the subject are part of the same prosodic phrase (marked by braces):

(12) *Germanic complementizer agreement*
  {[C (Prt) (Add) (Plr)] [D (Prt) (Add) (Plr)]} →
  {[C (Prt$_i$) (Add$_j$) (Plr$_k$)] [D (Prt$_i$) (Add$_j$) (Plr$_k$)]}
  (Ackema and Neeleman 2004: 241)

- The rule in (12) serves to identify the set of ϕ-features associated with C (Prt = Participant, Add = Addressee, Plr = Plural) with the relevant (interpretable) ϕ-features of the subject.

- <u>Adjacency effects</u>: due to the presence of an intervening XP between C and the subject, rule (12) cannot apply since the complementizer and the subject are in two different prosodic domains (marked by braces):

(13)   a. [$_{CP}$ C [$_{IP}$ XP [$_{IP}$ subject ... [$_{VP'}$ ... V ...]]]]
    b. {C XP} {subject} {...} {...V...}

- The Bavarian sluicing data can then be attributed to the fact that the subject has been deleted at/prior to PF. Therefore, it cannot participate in PF checking processes.

- <u>Empirical problem</u>: Data from comparatives in Bavarian show that the realization of complementizer agreement does not involve a checking relation between C and the subject's ϕ-features (in the syntax or at PF). Rather, it appears that it is the presence/absence of the inflected verb which is crucial for the availability of complementizer agreement:

(14)   a. D'Resl is gresser [als wia-st du bist]
     the-Resl is taller   than as-2SG you are
     'Resl is taller than you are.'
   b. *D'Resl   is gresser [als wia-st du]
     the-Resl is taller   than as-2SG you
   c. D'Resl   is gresser [als wia du]
     the-Resl is taller   than as you
     (Bayer 1984: 269)

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[4] Note that this conclusion is based on the standard assumption that sluicing is the result of post-syntactic deletion. Data like (14) cannot be used as an argument against syntactic accounts of complementizer agreement if sluicing is analyzed in terms of a covert syntactic process which replaces a null category representing the "elided" IP with a phrase marker copied from the relevant matrix antecedent (cf. Lobeck 1995, Chung, Ladusaw, and McCloskey 1995).

- In comparatives, overt agreement on C leads to ungrammaticality if the finite verb is absent from the structure, cf. (14b). The sentence becomes acceptable when the complementizer bears no inflection, cf. (14c).
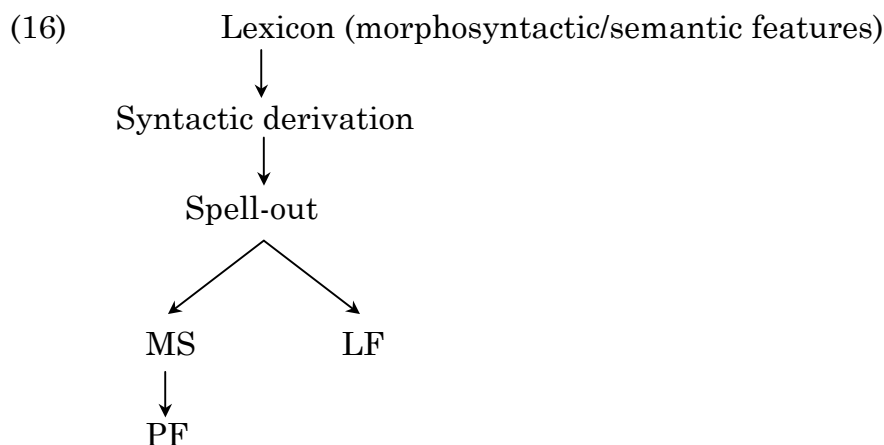

Conclusions:

(i)   Agreement between the complementizer and the subject cannot be implemented in terms of a checking relation between C^0 and the subject – neither in the syntax nor at PF. Otherwise one would expect examples such as (14b) to be grammatical.

(ii)   In some way, the inflection found in the C-domain is mediated by/parasitic on the presence of the finite verb.

(iii)   The facts in (11) and (14) suggest that complementizer agreement must operate post-syntactically: Sluicing and comparative deletion are standardly analyzed as the result of post-syntactic operations that delete material in the second clause, as illustrated in (15) for comparatives (cf. Bresnan 1973, Lechner 2001).

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(15)   D'Resl   is gresser [als   wia (*-st) du   ~~bist~~]
       the-Resl   is taller   than   as-2SG   you   (are)
       'Resl is taller than you are.'

- If licensing of complementizer agreement were to take place in the syntax, no interaction with PF-deletion of the finite verb would be expected: the finite verb would be present throughout the whole syntactic derivation, being subject to deletion only after the structure has been transmitted to the post-syntactic components of grammar.

4.   The proposal: post-syntactic insertion of agreement morphemes

- Background: realizational model of grammar (Distributed Morphology (DM), Halle & Marantz 1993) – the morphological component (called *Morphological Structure*, henceforth MS) operates post-syntactically; syntactic terminal nodes (called *morphemes*) are supplied with phonological content after syntax:

(16)   Lexicon (morphosyntactic/semantic features)
                          |
        Syntactic derivation
                          |
              Spell-out
                        /   \
              MS   LF
                |
              PF

- The constituent structure derived in the syntax can be modified by the post-syntactic insertion of inflectional heads/features. In DM, this mechanism is often used to account for case and agreement phenomena (cf. e.g. Marantz 1992, Halle & Marantz 1993, Embick 1997, Halle 1997, Noyer 1997, Harbour 2003).[5]
- However, a purely morphological analysis of all instances of grammatical agreement implies that MS has powerful syntax-like mechanisms at its disposal (e.g., a form of AGREE which serves to value Agr-morphemes), which is conceptually problematic; moreover, it is rather doubtful that the complex locality restrictions which are at work in phenomena such as long-distance agreement (cf. Sigurðsson 1996 on Icelandic, Polinsky & Potsdam 2001 on Tsez, Bruening 2001 on Pasamaquoddy) can be handled by morphological mechanisms alone in a satisfactory way.

4.1 A hybrid model of agreement

Verbal agreement

- 'Canonical' subject-verb agreement results from the presence of agreement features on T which are evaluated in the syntax by the operation AGREE (Chomsky 2000):

(17) $[_{CP} ... [_{TP}$ T+Agr ... $[_{vP}$ subject ... $]]]$

  AGREE

- By assumption, the agreement features present on T are represented as an agreement morpheme which is part of the numeration and adjoins to T prior to Merge of T with vP (for details see Fuß, to appear):

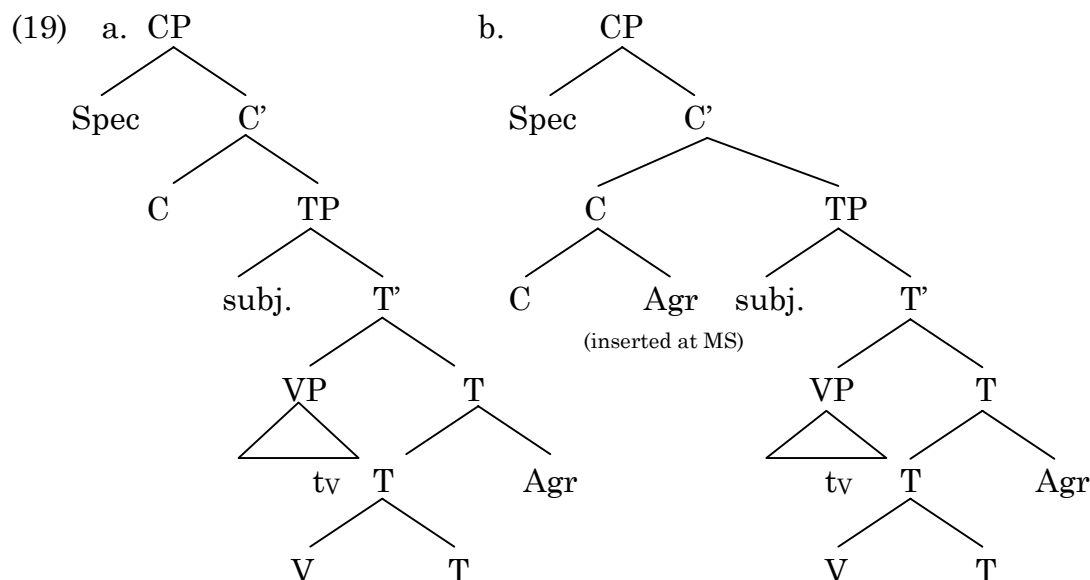(18)
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        T
       / \
      T   Agr
```

Complementizer agreement

- Recall:
  (i) Complementizer agreement operates post-syntactically.
  (ii) Agreement on C^0 depends on the presence of the inflected verb.

- Implementation:
  (i)   Complementizer agreement results from a morphological operation, the post-syntactic insertion of an Agr-morpheme at the level of MS (henceforth **Agr-on-C**).

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[5] Embick (1997) calls these post-syntactically inserted morphemes 'dissociated', since they are not present in the syntactic derivation and merely reflect (relational) properties expressed by structural configurations in the syntax.

(ii) Feature matching between Agr-on-C and the subject does not take place directly, but is *mediated* by another Agr-morpheme that has been valued by a syntactic AGREE relation:[6]

- The insertion process is illustrated by the following pair of phrase markers. In (19b), an agreement morpheme has been added to C at MS.

(19) a.

```
        CP
       /  \
    Spec   C'
          /  \
         C    TP
             /  \
          subj.  T'
                /  \
              VP    T
             / \   / \
            tv  T Agr
               / \
              V   T
```

b.

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              CP
             /  \
          Spec   C'
                /    \
               C      TP
              / \    /  \
             C  Agr subj. T'
          (inserted    /  \
            at MS)     VP   T
                      / \  / \
                     tv  T Agr
                        / \
                       V   T
```

- Licensing/evaluation of Agr-on-C:

(20) A post-syntactically inserted Agr-morpheme is parasitic on the presence of an Agr-morpheme that has been valued in the syntax.

- <u>More technically</u>: post-syntactically inserted Agr-on-C is a *copy* of Agr-on-T (only the latter has been valued by a syntactic AGREE relation).

- This mechanism ensures feature identity between these different types of Agr-morphemes (which both reflect the ϕ-feature content of the same argument).

- This account explains the restriction on complementizer agreement observed in Bavarian comparatives if we assume that at MS, the insertion of Agr-morphemes applies after the deletion of the syntactic terminal node which corresponds to the inflected verb (cf. e.g. Embick & Noyer 2001 for the ordering relations between different types of MS/PF operations).

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[6] See Sternefeld (to appear) for a syntactic implementation of the idea that complementizer agreement involves a dependency between C and the ϕ-features of the finite verb. The assumption that complementizer agreement is parasitic on verbal agreement is further supported by the observation that across Germanic, there appear to be no languages with complementizer agreement but without verbal agreement, while there are many languages that exhibit verbal agreement in the absence of complementizer agreement (Hoekstra & Smits 1999). Thus, it seems that cross-linguistically, the availability of complementizer agreement is dependent on the overt realization of verbal agreement morphology.

4.2 Adjacency effects

Basic assumptions:

(i)   The copying/insertion procedure giving rise to Agr-on-C operates in a strictly local fashion, requiring structural adjacency between C^0 and T^0 (as is typical of morphological rules in DM, cf. e.g Halle & Marantz 1993)

(ii)   Scrambled XPs do not adjoin to IP/TP but occupy the specifier of a functional projection (TopP/FocP above TP) that is only projected if it serves to implement certain information-structural distinctions (cf. Frey 2004, Grewendorf, to appear; see Jayaseelan 2001, Belletti 2002, and Haeberli 2002 for related proposals).[7]

- The condition in (21) and the definition of *structural adjacency* in (22) warrant strict locality between the syntactic Agr-morpheme on T^0 and its post-syntactically inserted copy on C^0:

(21)   *Insertion of morphological Agr-morphemes*
A post-syntactically inserted Agr-morpheme can attach to a functional head X only if X is *structurally adjacent* to another functional head Y hosting an Agr-morpheme that has been valued in the syntax.

(22)   *Structural adjacency*
A terminal node X and the closest terminal node Y c-commanded by X are *structurally adjacent.*

- In other words, the copy operation which creates a morphological Agr-morpheme may target only a syntactically valued Agr-morpheme which is locally c-commanded by the insertion site.

- According to (22), a head X is structurally adjacent to the head Y of its complement. Hence, Agr-on-C can only be inserted as a copy of Agr-on-T if C^0 is structurally adjacent to a T-head that hosts a valued Agr-morpheme.

- Adjacency effects: in (23), the PP *op den wärmsten dag van't joar* is located in the specifier of a TopP/FocP (simply labeled FP in (26)), the head of which disrupts structural adjacency between C^0 and T^0. As a result, the insertion of Agr-on-C is blocked.

(23)   *[CP datt-e [FP [PP op den wärmsten dag van't joar] [F' F^0
        that-1PL   on the warmest   day of-the year
    [TP wiej tegen   oonze wil ewärkt hebt.]]]
        we   against our   will worked have
    'that on the warmest day of the year we have worked against our will'

- Observation: Not all elements that intervene between C^0 and an additional subject (or rather, the TP) block the realization of complementizer agreement.

- In Bavarian, modal particles such as *aber, halt, ja* and clitic object pronouns may intervene between inflected C^0 and TP/the subject (cf. Altmann 1984):

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[7] See Rizzi (1997) and Branigan (2005) for similar proposals concerning the presence of TopP/FocP in the left periphery.

(24) dass-st <u>oaba</u> du ibaroi   dabei bis-st
      that-2SG PRT   you everywhere with-it are
      'that you really are involved everywhere'
      (Altmann 1984: 205)

(25) wia-sd=<u>n</u>   du   gseng hoasd
      when-2SG=CLIT.3SG you   seen   have
      'when you saw him'
      (Pfalz 1918: 231)

- Similarly, object clitics may intervene between the subject and the inflected complementizer in West Flemish, which otherwise requires strict adjacency between C and the subject (Liliane Haegeman, p.c.):

(26) da-<u>n</u>   ze   Valère en Marie   nie   gezien een
      that-3PL her Valère and Marie niet seen   have-3PL
      'that Valerie and Marie have not seen her'

- <u>Assumption</u>: The structural positions of clitics and modal particles differ from the position of scrambled XPs (only the latter move into a specifier position of a TopP or FocP intervening between C^0 and TP).

- <u>Modal particles</u>: are base-generated as adjuncts (here: TP-adjuncts) (cf. e.g. Abraham 1995). Accordingly, they do not require the projection of a separate TopP or FocP and do not disrupt the structural adjacency between C^0 and TP.

- <u>(Object) clitics</u>: ultimate surface position is determined by late MS-processes such as prosodic inversion/local dislocation (cf. Bonet 1991, Halpern 1992, Schütze 1994, Embick & Noyer 2001). Therefore, they reach their surface position after the insertion and valuation of late-inserted Agr-morphemes has been completed. Again, no interaction between these two processes is expected.

5. Conclusion

- The sensitivity of complementizer agreement to post-syntactic processes suggests that complementizer agreement is established in the post-syntactic components of grammar.

- In addition, complementizer agreement does not involve a (checking) relation between C and the subject. Rather, it seems to depend on the presence of the finite verb at MS/PF.

- Inflectional features present in the C-system are added post-syntactically to the structure via adjoining an Agr-morpheme to C^0 at MS (Agr-on-C)

- The feature content of Agr-on-C is identified under structural adjacency with another Agr-morpheme that has been valued in the syntactic derivation (i.e., Agr-on-C is a copy of Agr-on-T).

- <u>Hybrid theory of agreement</u>: we have to recognize the existence of a *morphological* mechanism giving rise to agreement phenomena, in addition to the purely syntactic licensing of Agr-morphemes.

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