

## Dialect levelling, degrammaticalisation, and entrenchment

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Dutch dialects display the interesting property of subject doubling, of which three examples are given in (1). In all the instances, a clitic, *-de*, *ze* or *-se*, is combined with a coreferential, optional strong pronoun (*gij*, *zij*).

- (1) a. Ga-de (gij) naar Brussel?  
       go-2sg. you to Brussels  
       ‘Are you going to Brussels?’
- b. Ze-gaat (zij) naar Brussel.  
       3sg.fem.-go.3sg. she to Brussels  
       ‘She is going to Brussels.’
- c. Ga-se (zij) naar Brussel?  
       go-3sg. she to Brussels  
       ‘Is she going to Brussels?’

The present distribution of the different types of subject doubling over the Dutch language area is shaped by both expansion waves and the partial loss of certain types (see the maps in SAND). Expansion is illustrated through the fact that the very widespread pattern in (1a) is also the oldest type of subject doubling. The relevance of loss can be deduced easily from diachronic studies on individual dialects, most notably from Will’s (2004) study on subject doubling in Zeeland Flanders. This study also shows that patterns like (1c) tend to suffer much more from dialect levelling than patterns like (1b) and certainly (1a).

In my talk, I will concentrate on two issues. First, it will be shown that, at least in some areas, the gradual regression of subject doubling as a result of dialect levelling, can also be conceived of as a process of degrammaticalisation (see De Vogelaer 2008). Second, I will investigate to what extent the current geographical distribution of a pattern corresponds to its degree of entrenchment in subject doubling dialects, and, in doing so, whether degrammaticalisation pathways are ‘entrenchment-sensitive’. The parameter ‘entrenchment’ will be operationalized in a number of different ways, most obviously as frequency (cf. Langacker 1987), but also as a structural parameter that relates to both form and function of the competing variants (cf. Croft’s 2000 analysis of language change as the remapping of form-function pairs). On the part of the different types of doubling, these include functional similarity to the competing Standard Dutch variant, formal similarity to the competing variant, and formal similarity to other types of subject doubling. Ideally, the structural parameters will cast some light over the rather ambiguous results with respect to the correlation between frequency and dialect levelling found in, e.g., Trudgill (1986).

### References

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