

# CLUES FROM DIALECT SYNTAX: COMPLEMENTIZER AGREEMENT

Jan-Wouter Zwart

University of Groningen

## 0. Introduction.\*

It is common opinion among linguists, that languages and dialects cannot be distinguished in a principled way. Languages differ from each other with respect to certain syntactic phenomena, but so do dialects. Especially recent theoretical developments have provided the tools needed to describe these differences in an explanatory way. However, these tools will not serve to distinguish, say, Dutch dialects from the Dutch language.

To be sure, we cannot exclude the possibility that one dialect of Dutch called Standard Dutch can be distinguished from all other dialects of Dutch by certain distinct linguistic criteria. However, this would be a matter of accidental taxonomy rather than one of methodological principle.

More interesting is the possibility that a phenomenon present only in certain dialects of Dutch reveals properties shared by all dialects of Dutch, but not by any dialect of, say, English. Obviously, this calls for generalizations at an appropriate level of abstraction.

If this possibility is real, outstanding problems in the syntax of a certain 'language' may find a solution based on evidence from certain 'dialects of that language' only. I will argue that one such problem of Dutch syntax can be resolved in this way.

The problem at hand is to find a principled explanation for the well known asymmetry between main clauses and embedded clauses with respect to the position of the finite verb. The dialect phenomenon providing the clue, I argue, is the phenomenon of complementizer agreement.

The term clue is used deliberately here. I do not argue that the complementizer agreement phenomenon explains anything. Rather, the presence of complementizer agreement --in certain dialects-- indicates the existence of an abstract coherence relation between the head of the Complementizer Phrase

(CP) and the head of the Agreement Phrase (AgrP) --in all dialects of the relevant language. It is this coherence relation that explains the asymmetry between main clauses and embedded clauses mentioned above.

This article is organized as follows. In section 1, the position of the finite verb in Dutch is discussed against the background of a general analysis of verb movement (cf. Chomsky 1992; Zwart 1991a, 1992a). The problem to be explained is why movement of the finite verb in embedded clauses is restricted. The proposed solution is that movement of AgrS to C in embedded clauses makes verb movement at S-structure superfluous. AgrS-to-C movement has been proposed earlier to account for phenomena of complementizer agreement (in Dutch, German, and Frisian), which are illustrated in section 2. In section 3, I argue, contra Hoekstra & Marác (1989a), that there is not a cluster of properties associated with overt complementizer agreement, hence that it is not clear that the AgrS-to-C movement is parametrized across Dutch, German, and Frisian dialects. Therefore, in section 4 I argue that this AgrS-to-C movement is present in all dialects of Dutch, German, and Frisian, even if there is no morphological reflex of the movement, and that this AgrS-to-C movement explains why in these languages the finite verb does not move in embedded clauses.

## 1. The Position of the Finite Verb in Dutch<sup>1</sup>

### 1.1 The Verb Movement Asymmetry

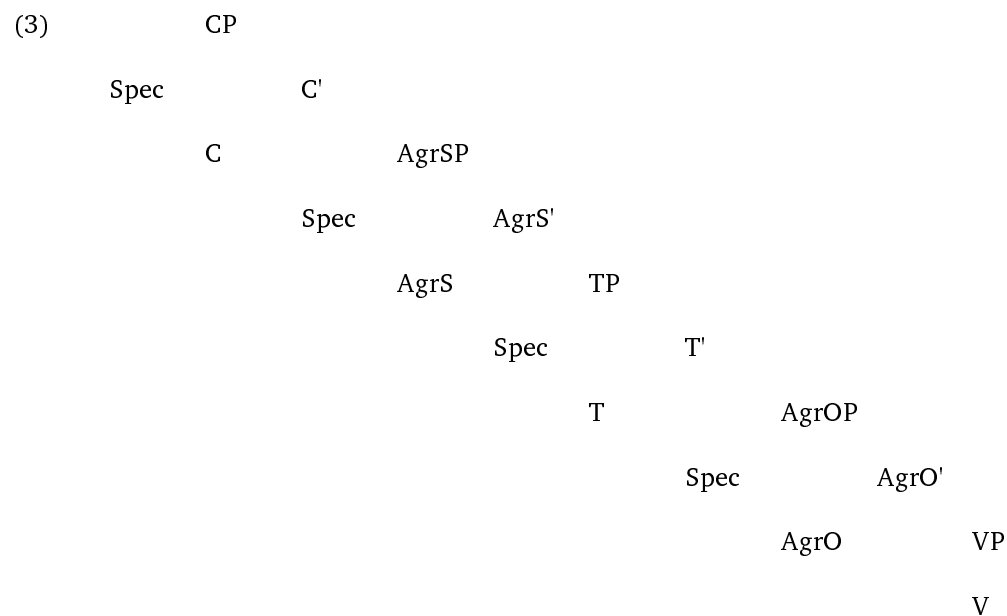
In all dialects of Dutch, the finite verb immediately follows the subject in subject initial main clauses, but not in embedded clauses.

- (1) a. Jan eet een appel  
John eats an apple  
b. ..dat Jan een appel eet  
that John an apple eats

I will call the position of the finite verb in embedded clauses 'final position', abstracting away from extraposition of PP and CP:<sup>2</sup>

- (2) a. ..dat Jan een appel eet [uit de eigen tuin]  
           that John an apple eats from the own garden  
       b. ..dat Jan een appel eet [die niet rijp is]  
           that John an apple eats that not ripe is  
       c. ..dat Jan probeert [om een appel te eten]  
           that John tries COMP an apple to eat

Starting from the sentence structure in (3) (Chomsky 1991, 1992), we will identify the final position of the verb as V and the second position in subject initial main clauses as AgrS.



The 'Spec' positions in the AgrSP and AgrOP are designated positions for the formal licensing of subjects and objects, respectively (Chomsky 1991, 1992; Mahajan 1989). This formal licensing (previously called 'Case assignment' or 'Case checking') takes place in Spec-Head relations exclusively (by hypothesis, Chomsky 1992). Therefore at some point in the derivation, either at S-structure or at LF, subjects and objects have to move to their respective licensing positions (Chomsky 1992), and the verb has to move through the various head positions, presumably on its way to C ('COMP') (cf. Law 1991).

I have argued elsewhere (Zwart 1991a, 1991b, 1992a, 1992b, 1992c) that in a simple sentence like (1a) the verb is in AgrS, and the subject in its designated licensing position Spec,AgrS (see also Travis 1984, 1991).

The projection of C, CP, is employed in main clauses if and only if some element with operator status moves up front (to Spec,C), accompanied by an additional movement of the verb to C. This creates a typical subject-verb inversion construction, familiar from numerous languages.

- (4) a. Wat eet Jan?  
what eats John  
"What does John eat?"  
b. Dat eet Jan niet  
that eats John not  
"That, John doesn't eat."

Sentences of the type in (4b) ('topicalizations') appear to be a subclass of the sentences of the type in (4a) ('wh-questions'). However, they are not, since topicalizations do not trigger inversion in many languages that do have inversion in wh-questions, like English.

- (5) a. What didn't John eat? [cf. John didn't eat fish]  
b. Fish John didn't eat [cf. \*Fish didn't John eat]

Therefore, it may be the case that the CP-projection in (3) should be split up further, but we will not go into that here (see Culicover 1991, Müller & Sternefeld 1992, Hoekstra & Zwart 1992).

I will not be concerned with the inversion phenomenon in wh-questions and topicalizations in Dutch. Neither will I be concerned with other analyses that have been proposed for the pattern of verb positions in sentences like (1) (for discussion, see Zwart 1991a, 1992a; see also Travis 1984, 1991). What I would like to discuss here is a problem that every analysis of this pattern faces, namely how to explain the verb movement asymmetry exemplified in the sentences in (1).

This problem can best be formulated as follows. Suppose we can identify a very good reason for the verb to move to AgrS in subject initial main clauses like (1a). Then why is the verb not forced to move to AgrS in embedded clauses by the same reason as well?

As can be seen in (6), movement of the verb to AgrS in embedded clauses is ungrammatical.

- (6) a. ..dat Jan een appel eet  
that John an apple eats  
b. \* ..dat Jan eet een appel  
that John eats an apple

Similarly, not moving the finite verb to AgrS in main clauses leads to ungrammaticality.<sup>3</sup>

- (7) a. Jan eet een appel  
John eats an apple  
b. \* Jan een appel eet  
John an apple eats

Thus, the question is: Why is a movement that is forced in main clauses blocked in embedded clauses?

## 1.2 A Non-Solution

Let me first put aside a type of answer to this question that cannot be maintained in a satisfactory way. One might argue that movement of the finite verb in embedded clauses is blocked because the position it is supposed to move to is occupied by some other element (Den Besten 1990).

Even if this is correct, it cannot be a complete answer to the question at hand. If movement of the finite verb in main clauses is forced by what we have called 'a very good reason', then we would expect the presence of any factor blocking this movement to lead to ungrammaticality.

Consider what this 'very good reason' forcing verb movement in main clauses might be. It cannot have anything to do with a licensing requirement applying to the verb itself. Otherwise, an embedded clause like (1b) would be ungrammatical, because no movement has taken place.

Therefore, one might conjecture that the reason for the verb movement is related to the landing site of the movement. It has been proposed that the verb movement in (1a) targets C and that, by some

language particular property, C must invariably be filled in Dutch. Then in embedded clauses like (1b), since the complementizer occupies C, verb movement to C is blocked (Den Besten 1990).

Note that it is crucial for the above reasoning that the verb in (1a) is not in AgrS, but in C. Therefore, this approach involves two movements in addition to the ones proposed so far: first, movement of V from AgrS to C, and, second, movement of the subject from Spec,AgrS to Spec,C.

Supposing that this is correct, we may wonder why a functional head should have to be filled obligatorily. The statement as such is, given the assumptions made, little more than a description of the facts. But let us assume that C has to be filled for a very good reason. Then it should be made precise what kind of grammatical mechanism would require C to be filled by no matter what.<sup>4</sup>

Suppose the very good reason for obligatorily filling C by no matter what has to do with licensing the subject (Nominative Case assignment). Then we have to conclude that C, as well as V, can assign Nominative Case, and that, in the presence of a Nominative Case assigning complementizer, movement of the finite verb is superfluous. However, this implies that Case can be assigned under government by a head (for instance, in (1b)), a perhaps unwanted addition to the general mechanism of Case assignment under Spec-Head agreement (needed in (1a)).

However, even assuming this much, we still have to formulate another very specific hypothesis, namely that when the verb moves to C (to assign Nominative Case) something has to precede the verb (for instance, the subject in (1a), or the topic in (4b)). Again, stated as such, this is little more than a description of the facts, unless a very good reason can be found for the additional movement of the subject to Spec,CP in (1a). This reason has never been come up with in the literature, and in the absence of it we must abandon this line of reasoning as unsatisfactory.<sup>5</sup>

It seems to me that what has escaped most researchers in this respect (with the notable exception of Travis 1991), is that a complementary distribution of two elements does not imply that these two elements occupy the same position. Thus, it may very well be the case that an element in C (the complementizer) entertains a certain relation with a lower functional head, so that verb movement to that head is superfluous if and only if the complementizer is present. This will be the line of argument in the present article (cf. Zwart 1991a, 1992a).

### 1.3 AgrS-to-C Movement

Let us return to the assumptions following from the structure adopted in (3). According to these assumptions, the verb is in AgrS in subject initial main clauses (1a) and in V in embedded clauses (1b). The subject is in Spec,AgrS in both cases, i.e. in the position in which it is formally licensed (assigned Nominative Case).

Now the problem is: What forces the verb movement in (1a), but blocks it in (1b)?

Let us assume, as above, that the formal licensing of the subject (Nominative Case assignment) is the pivot in the paradigm in (1). So, the verb moves to AgrS to assist in the formal licensing of the subject. Recall that we have assumed, following Chomsky (1992), that all formal licensing takes place in Spec-Head configurations.

We may then conjecture that something else takes care of the formal licensing of the subject in embedded clauses, thus making verb movement superfluous (and ruled out on grounds of economy; see Chomsky (1991, 1992)). However, given our assumptions, this 'something else' has to be in a Spec-Head configuration with the subject. Thus, the element taking care of the formal subject licensing and blocking the verb movement has to actually occupy the position AgrS. Since no visible element occupies AgrS in (1b), we are led to the conclusion that AgrS in embedded clauses is occupied by an empty category.

This again leads to the following question: If the subject can be licensed by an empty category in AgrS, then why is verb movement to AgrS needed in main clauses in the first place?

Obviously, AgrS can be empty just in case C is filled by a complementizer.<sup>6</sup> This observation leads Travis (1984, 1991) to an account in terms of the Empty Category Principle (ECP), which has been shown to be inadequate by Schwarz & Vikner (1989). In Zwart (1992a), I proposed the following account: for AgrS to be able to license the subject, AgrS has to be associated with a lexical element. This can be achieved in two ways: either (in main clauses) by moving the verb to AgrS, or (in embedded clauses) by moving AgrS itself to C, provided C is filled by a lexical element.<sup>7</sup>

Therefore the paradigm in (1), given the assumptions made, leads to the following hypothesis:

(8) In finite embedded clauses in Dutch, AgrS moves to C.

AgrS-to-C movement leaves a trace which engages in the formal licensing of the subject, and makes movement of the verb to AgrS superfluous.<sup>8</sup>

This much is forced upon us by the assumptions made above. In particular, by the adoption of the structure in (3), and by the assumption that formal licensing takes place in Spec-Head configurations exclusively.

As I argued in Zwart (1992a), this analysis receives empirical support from facts of complementizer agreement in a number of dialects of Dutch. I will therefore proceed to present these facts, and then discuss their theoretical relevance.

## 2. Complementizer Agreement

Numerous dialects of Dutch, German, and Frisian display a phenomenon of complementizer agreement, where the complementizer is inflected for person and/or number and agrees with the subject.<sup>9</sup> At the same time, the finite verb is also inflected. The inflectional morphemes used are generally identical, but not always (cf. Van Haeringen (1958) and below).

The paradigms are mostly defective. For instance, East Netherlandic has an agreeing complementizer only in the first person plural (1PL), South Hollandic only in 1PL and 3PL, Frisian only in 2SG, Munich Bavarian only in 2SG and 2PL. West Flemish has a complete paradigm (Goeman 1980, Haegeman 1990).

In large areas of the Netherlands (West Friesland, North Holland, South Holland, also in the Center and East of the country (Van Haeringen 1939, 1958), the agreement morpheme for PL is schwa. In German dialects and in Dutch dialects spoken in the Northeast and the Southeast, as well as in Frisian, there is an agreement morpheme for 2SG (and sometimes 2PL) -s(t).<sup>10</sup> Luxemburgish combines the two types of agreement (Bruch 1973). The Brabants dialect of Dutch has a morpheme -de for 2SG/PL (Stroop 1987). The Flemish dialects of Dutch have a full paradigm, with a morpheme -n for 1SG, 1PL, and 3PL, presumably a zero morpheme ( $\emptyset$ ) for 2SG, and a -t morpheme for 3SG/2PL (cf. Goeman 1980, Haegeman 1990).



The following are examples from the Dutch dialects South Hollandic (Van Haeringen 1939), West Flemish (Haegeman 1990), and Groningen (Van Ginneken 1939), from Frisian (Hoekstra & Marácz 1989a), and from the German dialects Munich Bavarian (Kufner 1961) and Luxemburgish (Bruch 1973).

(9) South Hollandic

- a. dat ik kom  
that I come
- b. datte we komme  
that-PL we come-PL

(10) West Flemish

- a. da-n-k ik komen  
that 1SG I I come-1SG
- b. da- $\phi$ -j gie komt  
that 2SG/PL you you come-2SG/PL
- c. da-t-j ij komt  
that 3SG he he come-3SG
- d. da- $\phi$ -se zij komt [ $\phi < t$ ]  
that 3SG she she come-3SG
- e. da- $\phi$ -me wunder komen [ $\phi < n$ ]  
that 1PL we we come-1PL
- f. da- $\phi$ -j gunder komt [ $\phi < t$ ]  
that 2PL you you come-2PL
- g. da-n-ze zunder komen  
that 3PL they they come-3PL

(11) Groningen

- a. of ik kom  
whether I come
- b. of-s toe koms  
whether 2SG you come-2SG

(12) Frisian

- a. datst (do) jûn komst  
that-2SG you tonight come-2SG
- b. dat (er) jûn komt  
that he tonight come-3SG

- (13) Munich Bavarian  
 a. damid ich komm  
 sothat I come  
 b. damidsd kommsd  
 sothat-2SG come-2SG  
 c. damidds kommds  
 sothat-2PL come-2PL

- (14) Luxemburgish  
 a. ob ech wëll  
 whether I want  
 b. ob s du wëlls  
 whether 2SG you want-2SG  
 c. datt e mir wëllen  
 that PL we want-PL

In these dialects, the agreement morpheme on the complementizer is identical to the agreement morpheme on the verb. However, Van Haeringen (1958) reports on East Netherlandic dialects where the complementizer agreement (c) and the verbal agreement (v) differ.

- (15) East Netherlandic  
 datte wij speult  
 that-1PLc we play-1PLv

The same appears to be the case in Brabants:<sup>11</sup>

- (16) Brabants  
 dadde gullie komt  
 that-2PLc you come-2PLv

Depending on the analysis of the phonological regularities connected with cliticization, the West Flemish 2SG may provide a third example where the complementizer agreement and the verbal agreement differ (cf. 10b vs 10c).<sup>12</sup>

- (10) West Flemish  
 b. da- $\phi$ -j gie komt  
 that 2SG you you come-2SG  
 c. da-t-j ij komt  
 that 3SG he he come-3SG

When the complementizer agreement and the verbal agreement differ, the verb has verbal agreement in subject initial main clauses, and complementizer agreement in subject-verb inversion structures.

- (17) East Netherlandic  
 a. Wij speul-t/\*-e  
 we play 1PLv/c  
 b. Waar speul-e/\*-t wij?  
 where play 1PLc/v we

- (18) Brabants  
 a. Gullie kom-t/\*-de  
 you come 2PLv/c  
 b. Wanneer kom-de/\*-t gullie?  
 when come 2PLc/v you

- (19) West Flemish  
 a. Gie kom-t/\*- $\phi$   
 you come 2SGv/c  
 b. Kom - $\phi$ -j/\*-t-j gie?  
 come 2SGc/v you you

This is reminiscent of a peculiar agreement phenomenon in Standard Dutch, where the morpheme of the 2SG depends on whether the verb precedes or follows the subject.<sup>13</sup>

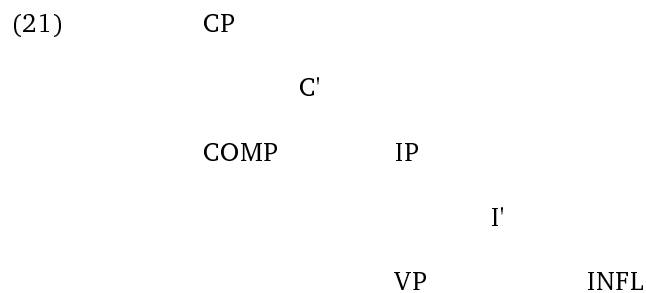
- (20) Dutch  
 a. Jij loop-t/\*- $\phi$   
 you walk 2SG  
 b. Daar loop- $\phi$ /\*-t jij  
 there walk 2SG you

I argue here and in Zwart (1992a) that this parallellism is not coincidental.

However, let us first consider a previous treatment of the Germanic complementizer agreement phenomena.

3. Hoekstra & Marácz (1989a)

Starting from the sentence structure in (21), Hoekstra & Marácz (1989a) argue that complementizer agreement results from a movement of INFL to COMP, which takes place independently of verb movement to COMP.<sup>14</sup>



According to Hoekstra & Marácz, INFL-to-COMP movement explains the presence of inflectional morphemes on the complementizer, and is therefore restricted to those dialects that have complementizer agreement.

The Hoekstra & Marácz analysis is supported if it can be shown that there is a cluster of properties connected with INFL-to-COMP movement, and that these properties are only present in complementizer agreement dialects.

Hoekstra & Marácz (1989a) therefore list four properties which they claim to be connected with INFL-to-COMP, and which they argue to be present in complementizer agreement dialects only.

These properties are: overt complementizer agreement; referential pro-drop; verb ellipsis in irrealis complement clauses; and complementizer cliticization. I will illustrate and discuss these properties in the following sections, showing that in no way do they constitute a cluster setting the group of complementizer agreement dialects apart.

### 3.1 Overt Complementizer Agreement

The presence of overt complementizer agreement is the defining property of what we have called 'complementizer agreement dialects' so far. The issue here is whether the remaining three properties mentioned in Hoekstra & Marác̄z (1989a) correlate with the presence of overt complementizer agreement.

### 3.2 Referential Pro-drop

Some dialects showing overt complementizer agreement allow referential pro-drop. Below are examples of Frisian and West Flemish, quoted from Hoekstra & Marác̄z (1989a).

- (22) Frisian
- a. Komst (do) jûn?  
come-2SG you tonight
  - b. ..datst (do) jûn komst  
that-2SG you tonight come-2SG

- (23) West Flemish<sup>15</sup>
- a. Goa- $\phi$ -se (zie) goan werken?  
go 2SG she she go work  
"Does she go to work?"
  - b. ..da- $\phi$ -se (zie) komt  
that 2SG she she come-2SG

It can be shown in the case of Frisian that in the absence of overt complementizer agreement referential pro-drop is disallowed.

- (24) Frisian
- a. Komt \*(er) jûn?  
come-3SG he tonight
  - b. ..dat \*(er) jûn komt  
that he tonight come-3SG

In the case of West Flemish this cannot be demonstrated, because West Flemish has a complete complementizer agreement paradigm.

However, it is clear that referential pro-drop in West Flemish is related to subject cliticization rather than to complementizer agreement. If the subject clitic is left out and complementizer agreement retained, referential pro-drop is impossible. Consider the following 3PL examples.

(25) West Flemish

- a. Goa-n \*(Pol en Valère) werk een?  
go-3PL Paul and Valery work have
- b. ..da-n \*(Pol en Valère) goan werk een  
that-3PL Paul and Valery go-3PL work have

(26) West Flemish

- a. Goa-n-ze (zunder) werk een?  
go 3PL they they work have
- a.' Goa-n \*(zunder) werk een?  
go 3PL they work have
- b. ..da-n-ze (zunder) goan werk een  
that 3PL they they go-3PL work have
- b.' ..da-n \*(zunder) goan werk een  
that 3PL they go-3PL work have

In (25), there is a (complementizer) agreement morpheme present on the verb in C (25a) and on the complementizer (25b). However, there is no subject clitic. The overt subject cannot be dropped, which shows that pro-drop is not related to complementizer agreement, but to subject cliticization. (26) illustrates the same point. In (26a) and (26b), the subject clitic ze is doubled by a full pronoun zunder. This full pronoun can be dropped, but not if the subject clitic is absent, as (26a') and (26b') show. Note that in these examples the complementizer agreement is present, but unable to license pro-drop.

The same may be the case in Frisian. The status of the Frisian complementizer agreement morpheme has been a subject of debate for a long time (see Van der Meer 1991, De Haan 1992 for recent discussions). It has been argued that this morpheme is really a subject clitic, reduced to the extent that it became unrecognizable as such, which made the optional addition of a pronoun possible. The similarity of the complementizer agreement to the verbal agreement would then be accidental.

It may well be the case that something along these lines took place (cf. Givón 1971), but the presence of the -s- preceding the -to-/-te-/-t morpheme is unaccounted for in this scenario. It is likely, therefore, that the -sto- morpheme and its variants are combinations of an agreement morpheme and a subject clitic (Visser 1988, De Haan 1992). If this is correct, again referential pro-drop could be related to cliticization rather than to complementizer agreement.<sup>16</sup>

When we consider other Germanic dialects, there appears to be no correlation whatsoever between complementizer agreement and referential pro-drop. Hoekstra & Marácz (1989a) mention the case of Zurich German (Cooper & Engdahl 1989) as problematic for their generalization. These dialects show referential pro-drop, but no complementizer agreement.

- (27) Zurich German  
 a. ..dass (d/du) in Züri wohnsch  
     that you in Zurich live-2SG  
 b. ..öb (d/du) nach Züri chunnsch  
     whether you to Zurich come-2SG

Similarly, the Hollandic dialects that show complementizer agreement never allow referential pro-drop.

- (28) South Hollandic  
 a. Komme \*(ze)?  
     come-PL they  
 b. ..ovve \*(ze) komme  
     whether-PL they come-PL

- (29) East Netherlandic  
 a. Speule \*(we)?  
     play-1PLc we  
 b. ..datte \*(wij) speult  
     that-1PLc we play-1PLv

In short, there seems to be no significant correlation between overt complementizer agreement and referential pro-drop in the Germanic dialects. Certain dialects lacking overt complementizer agreement do have referential pro-drop, others that do have overt complementizer agreement lack

referential pro-drop. Pending the analysis of the Frisian type referential pro-drop, it may even be the case that not a single example of referential pro-drop in Germanic is related to complementizer agreement.

### 3.3 V-ellipsis

In Frisian infinitival complement clauses that have an 'unrealized future' reading, the infinitive, along with the infinitival marker *te* 'to', can be left out (Hoekstra & Marácz 1989a, 83).<sup>17</sup>

- (30) Jan is fan doel om nei Ljouwert ta (te gean)  
John is of purpose for to Leeuwarden to to go-INF  
"John intends to go to Leeuwarden."

This is impossible in Standard Dutch.

- (31) Jan is van plan om naar Leeuwarden toe \*(te gaan)  
John is of plan for to Leeuwarden to to go

Hoekstra & Marácz (1989a) explain the Frisian V-ellipsis by proper government of the verb (which has moved to INFL where the infinitival marker is) by COMP, made possible after movement of an irrealis feature from INFL to COMP. The latter movement is an instance of the INFL-to-COMP movement which also makes complementizer agreement possible in Frisian, according to this analysis. It is assumed that proper government is only possible by a head equipped with inflectional features, the irrealis feature ('unrealized future') being an inflectional feature. It follows that Dutch, which does not have INFL-to-COMP movement, in this analysis, lacks V-ellipsis.

Whatever the merit of this analysis, the point to be made here is that V-ellipsis is a phenomenon Hoekstra & Marácz (1989a) fail to demonstrate in any other Germanic dialect, with or without complementizer agreement.



Many dialects of German do not allow inspection of the presence of V-ellipsis, because of a distinct preference for finite subordinate clauses (Alemannic, Bavarian, Luxemburgish).<sup>18</sup> But the Dutch dialects that show complementizer agreement pattern with Standard Dutch rather than with Frisian with respect to the possibility of V-ellipsis.

- (32) South Hollandic  
 datte ze van plan benne om naar Amsterdam toe \*(te gaan)  
 that-PL they of plan are-PL for to Amsterdam to to go

### 3.4 Complementizer Cliticization

Hoekstra & Marácz (1989a) note that Frisian has a phenomenon of complementizer cliticization which Dutch lacks. The phenomenon shows up in embedded questions and relative clauses.

- (33) Frisian  
 a. Hy freget wa (of) \*(t) jûn komt  
 he asks who if that tonight comes  
 "He asks who's coming tonight."  
 b. de frou dy \*(t) jûn komt  
 the woman who that tonight comes

- (34) Dutch  
 a. Hij vraagt wie (of)(dat) er vanavond komt  
 he asks who if that there tonight comes  
 b. de vrouw die (\*dat) vanavond komt  
 the woman who that tonight comes

Frisian and Dutch are alike in that in non-wh complement clauses the complementizer cannot be deleted.<sup>19</sup>

(35) Frisian  
Hy tinkt \*(dat) se jûn komt  
he thinks that she tonight comes

(36) Dutch  
Hij denkt \*(dat) ze vanavond komt  
he thinks that she tonight comes

Frisian and Dutch are also alike in that full complementizers cannot be retained in relative clauses, as can be seen in (34b) for Dutch, and below for Frisian.

(37) de frou dy 't/\*dat jûn komt  
the woman who that tonight comes

The difference between Frisian and Dutch then, is that Frisian, but not Dutch, has a clitic complementizer (t) which is not affected by whatever causes the full complementizer to delete.<sup>20</sup>

Hoekstra & Marác (1989a) suggest that the clitic complementizer in Frisian cannot be deleted because some lexical element in COMP has to host INFL after INFL-to-COMP movement. This analysis predicts that all dialects that have complementizer agreement must have something in COMP in relative clauses, either a clitic or a full complementizer.

This can easily be disproved. For instance, in West Flemish relative clauses, the complementizer can be left out ( $\phi$  indicates a phonetically empty element).

(38) den vent die  $\phi$  hier geweest eet  
the man who here been has

West Flemish being a complementizer agreement dialect, we must assume, in Hoekstra & Marác's (1989a) analysis, that INFL-to-COMP takes place, and that therefore COMP cannot be emptied. Hoekstra & Marác (1989a:80) note that in this case the empty complementizer can be identified by Spec-Head agreement in CP, which is correct, but it is unclear why the same Spec-Head agreement does not permit deletion of the complementizer clitic in Frisian in (33b).

Similarly, in Dutch dialects of the South Hollandic type, the complementizer can be empty in relative clauses, even if overt complementizer agreement appears.

- (39) South Hollandic
- a. jonges die  $\phi$ -e werk wille  
guys who COMP-PL jobs want-PL
  - b. van die rame, waar  $\phi$ -e ze de gordijne mee spanne  
of these frames where COMP-PL they the curtains with draw  
"the type of frames with which they draw the curtains"

In these cases, it is clear that INFL-to-COMP takes place, yet the COMP position need not be overtly filled.

Other examples are provided by the Bavarian and Luxemburgish type dialects.

- (40) Luxemburgish
- a. Géi wuer  $\phi$ -s de wëlls  
go where COMP-2SG you want-2SG
  - b. Kenns de déi Leit, déi  $\phi$ -en dat behaapten?  
know-2SG you these people who COMP-PL that claim  
"Do you know the people who claim that?"

In conclusion, it cannot be the case that the obligatory presence of clitic complementizers in relative clauses in Frisian is explained by Hoekstra & Marác's INFL-to-COMP parameter.

### 3.5 Conclusion

It seems fair to conclude that the four properties listed by Hoekstra & Marác (1989a) in connection with their INFL-to-COMP parameter do not constitute a cluster separating languages with overt complementizer agreement from languages without overt complementizer agreement.

Nevertheless, there is reason to believe that languages with complementizer agreement have important properties in common which can be reduced to AgrS-to-COMP movement. However, I will argue that these are general properties of all dialects of Dutch, German, and Frisian, regardless of the presence of overt complementizer agreement.

Complementizer agreement arguably points to the existence of a certain coherence between C and AgrS. The coherence of this type is standardly expressed in terms of movement. The analysis of Hoekstra & Maracz (1989a) therefore appears to be on the right track. I will assume without further discussion that complementizer agreement is a morphological reflex of AgrS-to-COMP movement.<sup>21</sup>

Nevertheless, the parametrization Hoekstra & Maracz (1989a) propose appears to be unjustified.

As we have seen in section 2, complementizer agreement is often defective. In some cases, like West Flemish, zero morphemes can be assumed in order to attain a full paradigm. But in other cases, like East Netherlandic and Frisian, overt complementizer agreement is restricted to one person only (1PL and 2SG, respectively). In that case, massive zero morphology could be assumed, but then it is only a small step to assume zero complementizer agreement in Germanic languages across the board.

The important point here is the following. If Hoekstra & Maracz are correct, there is a parametric split among West Germanic dialects, marked by the presence or absence of INFL-to-COMP movement independent of verb movement. INFL-to-COMP movement is linked to the presence of overt complementizer agreement. However, it cannot be the case that INFL-to-COMP takes place if and only if overt complementizer agreement is present, because this would lead to the conclusion that in certain dialects INFL-to-COMP takes place in certain persons of the inflectional paradigm only. Apart from referential pro-drop, for which see section 3.2, there are no person-related grammatical properties in the languages in question. Thus, it cannot be the case that these languages choose different parametric options depending on person.

Therefore the link between complementizer agreement and parametric choice must be indirect. If a language has complementizer agreement in some specific person, then it has independent INFL-to-COMP. This opens up the possibility that even if complementizer agreement is never overt, the independent INFL-to-COMP movement takes place. We know that complementizer agreement is a disappearing phenomenon in many parts of the area (especially the Hollandic and Flemish type agreement, Vanacker 1949). We also know that complementizer agreement is a doubling phenomenon: it is never the sole instantiation of agreement in the sentence. Therefore it may well be subject to obliteration, even if the INFL-to-COMP movement which it is a morphological reflex of is still in force.

Obviously, this is an empirical question. Do dialects losing overt complementizer agreement radically change their syntax as could be expected if a different parametric option underlies the change? I know of no such syntactic changes accompanying the loss of complementizer agreement.

On the other hand, there may be indications that languages without overt complementizer agreement nevertheless do have morphological reflexes of INFL-to-COMP movement. As we have seen in section 2, the complementizer agreement shows up on the verb in subject-verb inversion constructions. In the 2SG of Standard Dutch, which has no complementizer agreement, the inverted verb has a different form from the non-inverted form. (See (20), repeated here for convenience.)

- (20) Dutch  
a. Jij loop-t/\*- $\phi$   
   you walk 2SG  
b. Daar loop- $\phi$ /\*-t jij  
   there walk 2SG you

This mysterious fact can be explained if the special form of the verb in (20b) is due to a morphological reflex of INFL-to-COMP movement, just like in the dialects that have overt complementizer agreement.

As Hoekstra & Marác (1989a) themselves note, the dialects that have overt complementizer agreement and those that do not, show by and large the same syntactic properties. In particular, all these dialects display the peculiar main clause-embedded clause asymmetry with respect to the position of the finite verb. If it can be argued that some of these properties are related to INFL-to-COMP movement (for instance by comparison with languages like English and Icelandic, which lack the asymmetry mentioned), the position that INFL-to-COMP movement takes place if and only if there is overt complementizer agreement becomes untenable.

#### 4. AgrS-to-COMP and the Verb Movement Asymmetry

Let us now return to the main issue in this article, the verb movement asymmetry illustrated in (1), repeated here.

- (1) a. Jan eet een appel  
John eats an apple  
b. ..dat Jan een appel eet  
that John an apple eats

In section 1, I argued for the existence of AgrS-to-C movement in (1b). This movement leaves a trace which engages in the formal licensing of the subject in Spec,AgrS. At the same time, the AgrS-to-C movement makes V-movement to AgrS superfluous. In the absence of a complementizer for AgrS to move to, V has to move to AgrS, to assist in the licensing of the subject in Spec,AgrS.

This analysis is based on the assumption that the licensing of the subject in Spec,AgrS requires lexicalization of AgrS.<sup>22</sup> As proposed in Zwart (1992a), AgrS can be lexicalized in two ways. One way is to move a lexical element to AgrS (V-to-AgrS), and another way is to move AgrS to a lexical element (AgrS-to-C). Both options are illustrated in (41).

- (41) a. [<sub>AgrSP</sub> NP AgrS+V<sub>i</sub> [ ... t<sub>i</sub> ... ]]  
b. [<sub>CP</sub> C+AgrS<sub>i</sub> [<sub>AgrSP</sub> NP t<sub>i</sub> [ ... V ... ]]]

(41a) corresponds to (1a), and (41b) to (1b).

In section 1, the motivation for this analysis was purely conceptual. Given the assumption that NPs are licensed in Spec-Head configurations exclusively, there must be an empty element in Spec,AgrS in (1b) to license the subject.

The discussion of the complementizer agreement facts in sections 2 and 3 now provides an empirical argument for the proposed analysis of the verb movement asymmetry.

First note that all Germanic complementizer agreement dialects display the verb movement asymmetry illustrated in (1).

- (42) South Hollandic  
a. ze komme morgge  
they come-PL tomorrow  
b. datte ze morgge komme  
that-PL they tomorrow come-PL

- (43) West Flemish  
a. ik komen vandoage  
I come-1SG today  
b. dank vandoage komen  
that-1SG-I today come-1SG

- (44) Groningen  
a. doe koms net  
you come-2SG not  
"You don't come."  
b. ofstoe net koms  
if-2SG-you not come-2SG

- (45) Frisian  
a. Do komst jûn  
you come-2SG tonight  
b. datst do jûn komst  
that-2SG you tonight come-2SG

- (46) Munich Bavarian  
a. du kommsd ned  
you come-2SG not  
b. damidsd ned kommsd  
sothat-2SG not come-2SG

- (47) Luxemburgish  
a. du wëlls nêt  
you want-2SG not  
b. ob s du nêt wëlls  
whether 2SG you not want-2SG

In the dialects illustrated, the adverb follows the finite verb in main clauses (the a-sentences), but precedes it in embedded clauses (the b-sentences). In each of these sentences, a reversal of the verb-adverb order would be ungrammatical, just like in Standard Dutch (cf. (6)-(7)).

We have assumed, following Hoekstra & Marácz (1989a), that complementizer agreement is a morphological reflex of AgrS-to-C movement. Therefore, the conceptually motivated AgrS-to-C movement can actually be demonstrated in the dialects and languages showing overt complementizer agreement.

In section 3, I have argued that there is not a cluster of properties associated with overt complementizer agreement in the Germanic dialects. Thus, it is unattractive to hypothesize a parametric split among the Germanic dialects related to overt complementizer agreement. The parameter involved would merely capture the variation in overt morphology, but have no syntactic consequences whatsoever.

We can only conclude that if AgrS-to-C movement takes place in the complementizer agreement dialects of Germanic, it also takes place in those languages and dialects of Germanic that show exactly the same behavior but for the overt complementizer agreement morphology. Thus, there is no reason to suppose that AgrS-to-C movement is present in the Dutch South Hollandic dialect, but not in Standard Dutch.

This conclusion is important, because the AgrS-to-C hypothesis provides an explanation for the verb movement asymmetry illustrated in (1). Let me finally repeat this explanation here.<sup>23</sup>

The analysis makes crucial use of the approach to movement and inflectional morphology initiated in Chomsky (1992). In this approach, elements are inserted from the Lexicon in fully inflected form, and have to move to Spec positions or head positions to check the features associated with the inflection. These movements preferably take place at LF, but parameter setting may force movement at S-structure.

In complementizer agreement dialects, AgrS-to-C movement takes place. Since complementizer agreement is agreement with the subject, we may assume that AgrS-to-C movement takes place to make the licensing of the subject in Spec,AgrS possible. AgrS-to-C movement leaves a trace in AgrS, so that AgrS is lexicalized and the licensing of the subject can take place. Because of the AgrS-to-C movement, V remains inside VP and moves to AgrS only as a Last Resort, as in subject initial main clauses.<sup>24</sup>

This analysis now carries over to languages that display the verb movement asymmetry, but which do not display any overt complementizer agreement morphology. In these languages, then, the parameter setting requires licensing of the subject at S-structure, but the inflected V may be licensed at LF.



If this is correct, the movements associated with the paradigm in (1) are all triggered by the requirement that the subject be licensed at S-structure, and by the assumption, made above, that for this licensing to take place, AgrS must be lexicalized.

A final piece of evidence that this is correct is provided by Frisian, one of the complementizer agreement languages. Frisian generally observes the verb movement asymmetry illustrated for Dutch in (1), but in addition Frisian allows verb movement in embedded clauses. This takes place in the complement of a limited set of verbs, basically the class of verbs identified by Hooper & Thompson (1973) as allowing root phenomena in their complement clauses.

If the present analysis is correct, the verb movement in the embedded clause in these constructions must be triggered by the requirement that the subject be licensed at S-structure. Since we have identified V-to-AgrS as a Last Resort movement, in these constructions AgrS-to-C cannot take place. We predict therefore that complementizer agreement will be impossible in Frisian embedded verb movement constructions. This prediction is borne out (De Haan & Weerman 1986, Van der Meer 1991).<sup>25</sup>

(48) Frisian  
Heit sei dat do/\*datsto moast soks net leauwe  
dad said that you must-2SG that not believe

The fact that complementizer agreement is impossible in (48) indicates that AgrS-to-C does not take place. The embedded verb movement therefore takes place exactly as predicted by the analysis presented here.<sup>26</sup>

This shows that AgrS-to-C movement and V-to-AgrS movement serve the same goal. On the assumption that V-to-AgrS movement in a dialect without complementizer agreement, like Standard Dutch, has the same trigger as in a complementizer agreement dialect, we must conclude that the absence of V-to-AgrS movement has the same explanation in both types of dialects as well.

## 5. Conclusion

It has been argued in this article that general syntactic properties of a certain group of narrowly related languages and dialects may be explained on the basis of evidence from some of these languages and dialects only. The verb movement asymmetry exemplified in (1) can be explained by hypothesizing AgrS-to-C movement in embedded clauses. Overt morphological reflexes of this movement are present in a subset of the languages and dialects that show the verb movement asymmetry. Since there is not a cluster of properties associated with the overt complementizer agreement morphology, we must conclude that the parameter involved in the AgrS-to-C movement has a wider scope. It is argued that it explains the verb movement asymmetry, and that the fact that, for example, English lacks the verb movement asymmetry is explained by the absence of AgrS-to-C movement in that language. The analysis shows once again that syntactic generalizations can only be made by abstracting away to a certain extent from phenomena of overt morphology.

#### Notes

- \* This paper was presented at the XIIth Groningen Grammar Talks ("Dialect Syntax in the Germanic Languages"), at the University of Groningen, June 8, 1992. I would like to thank the audience for discussion and comments on the data. Also thanks to Werner Abraham for organizing the workshop, and to Eric Hoekstra for much discussion on the nature of dialectal variation. An earlier version of this paper was commented on by Josef Bayer and Werner Abraham, whose input is gratefully acknowledged.
1. In this section, the exposition is restricted to Dutch. The paradigms are identical in Frisian and German, with some modifications. Thus, in embedded clauses in German, but not in Dutch, the complementizer can be left out, in which case again the verb immediately follows the subject. In Frisian, like in Swedish, the verb may immediately follow the subject even in embedded clauses with an overt complementizer, provided the clause is embedded under a verb predicating an 'assertion' in the sense of Hooper & Thompson (1973). See section 4.
  2. Extraposition is generally considered to be a rightward movement. However, it may be the case that what really takes place is a limited movement of the verb to the left, leaving behind only those elements that need not move to the left as well for reasons of formal licensing (Case assignment). Thus, if objects in Dutch have to move to Spec,AgrO for Case assignment, the OV order in embedded clauses does not necessarily indicate that the verb is in V, or even that Dutch is an OV-language. Thus, it may be the case that 'extraposition' is really stranding in either a complement position or an adjunct position. This raises certain problems for the status of particles and predicative PPs, which have to appear in front of the verb in embedded clauses. We will not go into that here. See Kaan (1991), Zwart (1991c), Kayne (1992).

3. Perhaps significantly, a main clause with the finite verb in V is much more sharply ungrammatical than an embedded clause with the finite verb in AgrS, especially in colloquial Dutch. In earlier work, I have taken this to indicate that there is a vacant functional head to the right of C in embedded clauses in Dutch, and that verb movement in embedded clauses would violate economy (Zwart 1990). However, economy violations should give rise to ungrammaticality of the worst kind (Chomsky 1992). Also, unexpectedly from my earlier point of view, speakers producing embedded verb movement sentences also produce topic initial embedded verb second clauses. Therefore this phenomenon seems to be related to the embedded verb second phenomenon in Swedish and Frisian. I will turn to these in section 4. Briefly, it would seem to be the case that in these constructions, AgrS-to-C does not take place, so that again verb movement is required. This may explain the reported embedded verb second clauses in colloquial Dutch as well.
4. What is at stake here is the issue of explanatory adequacy. If we assume, as in Chomsky (1992), that all processes in the grammar are triggered by syntactic feature licensing requirements, parameters cannot refer to requirements that certain heads be filled. Rather, they should refer to some feature that must be licensed by filling a head position. Since V does not have to move in overt syntax in embedded clauses in Dutch, the relevant feature requiring C to be filled cannot be a feature of V. C has no morphological features, by definition. Therefore, the requirement that C be filled can only be related to licensing of NPs. The requirement that movement be triggered is a principle of economy (Chomsky 1991, 1992).
5. Note that the subject can be assigned Nominative Case in Spec,AgrS in topicalizations and wh-questions, where the verb is in C (cf. (4)). Therefore, if the verb moves to C in (1a) as well, there is no obvious reason why the subject should move on to Spec,C. Note that the movement of the topic in (4b) is not unmotivated, assuming that topics are licensed in the Spec of a functional projection somewhere high up in the tree. The movement of the subject to Spec,C however cannot be described as topicalization (contra Koopman 1984), as shown by Travis (1984) and Zwart (1991b). It goes without saying that recourse to a general 'V2 constraint' should be avoided (cf. Vikner 1991).
6. On embedded questions, see Zwart (1992a). As always, elements can be phonetically empty but still 'lexical'. For instance, the often assumed empty complementizer in embedded questions blocks verb movement in Dutch as well as do-support in English. In section 3.4, some examples are presented in which the empty complementizer displays complementizer agreement. This shows that the empty complementizer is a target for Agr-to-C movement just like its covert counterpart.
7. This latter modification is needed for German, where the paradigm of (1) is basically mirrored, but for the possibility of having embedded clauses without lexical complementizers. In that case verb movement takes place. Again, embedded questions are taken to have an empty lexical complementizer.
8. It is assumed that the verb will have to move (to C, eventually) at LF, but that is irrelevant at present.
9. The complementizer agreement phenomenon is well documented, although its status is occasionally debated. The following is a list of references. For Dutch dialects: Van Haeringen (1939; 1958), Van Ginneken (1939), Weijnen (1939), De Vries (1939), Vanacker (1949), De Visser (1979), Goeman (1980), Bennis and Haegeman (1984), Stroop (1987), De Geest (1990),

Haegeman (1990, 1991); for Frisian dialects: Hoekema (1955), De Haan & Weerman (1986), Visser (1988), Van der Meer (1991), De Haan (1992); for German dialects: Weise (1907), Pfalz (1918), Van Ginneken (1939), Kufner (1961), Bruch (1973), Altmann (1984), Bayer (1984), Körner (1984), Werner (1988), Harnisch (1989). In addition to the works mentioned, the phenomenon is discussed in Hoeksema (1986), Hoekstra & Marącz (1989a), Zwart (1992a), Platzack (1992), Shlonsky (1992), among others.

10. The status of the -s(t) ending on the complementizer in Germanic dialects has been hotly debated for about at least a century now. The -s- element, which also shows up in the verbal agreement, appears to be inflectional, but it may be the case that the -st ending combines a complementizer agreement element and a subject clitic. See section 3.2. For recent discussion, cf. Van der Meer (1991) and De Haan (1992).
11. The de morpheme is not a clitic, because it cannot appear in subject initial main clauses, either independently or in conjunction with a clitic doubling element, as in West Flemish.
12. Liliane Haegeman (p.c.) suggests that in (10b) the complementizer agreement morpheme is not zero but a phonologically reduced -t- morpheme. In addition, one could argue that the -t- morpheme in (10c) does not reduce because the j of the 3SGM subject clitic is underlyingly different from the -j- of the 2SG subject clitic. But see note 13.
13. Apparently, West Flemish is like Dutch in that it has a different morphology depending on whether the subject and the verb are inverted or not (cf. (19a)). Similarly, the absence of the -t in West Flemish 2SG complementizer agreement need not be the result of a phonological rule. For the special verbal morphology of the inverted verb in 2SG in Dutch, see Goeman (1992).
14. Hoekstra & Marącz (1989a) are not clear about the relative order of VP and INFL. In Hoekstra & Marącz (1989b) it is assumed that INFL is to the right of VP in West Germanic, a standard assumption that Travis (1984) and Zwart (1991a) argue against.
15. The zero morphemes are phonologically reduced t morphemes. Thus, the complementizer agreement and the verbal agreement are identical here.
16. However, pro-drop in Frisian apparently may be licensed by the verbal 2SG agreement alone, witness examples like (i) (from De Haan 1992).
 

(i) Moatst my helpe  
       must-2SG me help  
       "You've got to help me."

Also, as pointed out by Josef Bayer (p.c.), even if there is historical evidence for the presence of a clitic element in the Frisian type inflected complementizer, this element doesn't function as a clitic anymore. Therefore, it may be the case that in certain languages and dialects, among which Frisian, pro-drop is licensed by agreement, and that in others (among which West Flemish) pro-drop is licensed by cliticization. Even so, it cannot be maintained that there is a correlation between pro-drop and complementizer agreement.
17. In (30), the directionality is expressed by a circumposition nei..ta, the second element of which is not to be confused with the infinitival marker.
18. Nevertheless, purpose clauses in Luxemburgish can be expressed in a fir ze 'for to' construction (Bruch 1973:103). I have found no examples of the Frisian type V-ellipsis, however.
19. Abstracting away from the possibility that complementizerless embedded clauses are saved by verb movement, as is possible in German, and marginally so in Dutch and Frisian.

20. This generalization is formulated in a slightly different way in Hoekstra & Marácz (1989a), who state that complementizer cliticization in Frisian is obligatory wherever complementizer deletion is obligatory in Dutch. This formulation obscures the fact that Frisian has complementizer deletion in exactly the same circumstances as Dutch, abstracting away from the additional property of complementizer cliticization.
21. For extensive discussion, see Zwart (1992a). Some clarifications are in order. It is assumed that inflected elements are inserted from the Lexicon in fully inflected form. Thus, inflectional morphemes are not generated in functional heads. Rather, functional heads are bundles of abstract features corresponding to the features of the inflected elements. Movement takes place to check these features off. Therefore, what moves from AgrS to C is not a morpheme, but an abstract feature associated with AgrS. This feature is involved in the formal licensing of the subject. In addition, AgrS contains a feature involved in the licensing of the inflected verb. For this reason, the presence of an inflected complementizer does not cancel the inflection on the verb, as in dummy verb constructions e.g. in English. For this view on the relation between functional heads and inflectional morphology, see Chomsky (1992).
22. This assumption is not without problems. Presumably, the requirement that a functional head be lexicalized for Spec-Head licensing to take place should be parametrized. At present, I do not see an interesting way of doing this. However, this requirement seems to play a role in the CP domain as well, where movement of a topic to Spec,C triggers V-movement to C in some languages but not in others (cf. (4)-(5)). Similarly for wh-movement, which triggers V-movement in Germanic, but not in Slavic (Kraskow 1990).
23. For a fuller treatment, see Zwart (1992a).
24. In topicalizations and questions, V moves to C. In those dialects where verbal agreement and complementizer agreement differ, it is complementizer agreement that shows up on the verb. This suggests that AgrS-to-C takes place whenever a lexical element occupies C, and that complementizer agreement somehow overrides verbal agreement (see Zwart 1992c).
25. It remains to be determined what exactly explains the impossibility of AgrS-to-C in this type of construction. Notice that extraction out of embedded verb second clauses is also impossible, which suggests some blocking factor between C and AgrS. I leave this for further research.

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