# On V2, gaps, and operators in comment and reporting parentheticals

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**Abstract.** Parenthetical comment and reporting clauses exhibit various interesting properties, which are shown to be related. Three different word order patterns are attested in Dutch and German: apparent V1, V2 and V-final; the internal argument of the parenthetical verb is usually missing; there is an optional *so/zo* element; the construction is island-sensitive. These patterns are explained by means of an operator that is A´-moved inside the parenthetical, and which can optionally be lexicalized in the first position. The V-final pattern arises when a complementizer is present, which is the case in propositional *as*-parentheticals.

**Keywords:** comment clause, reporting clause, *as*-parenthetical, operator, anaphoric *so*, word order, verb second (V2)

## 1. Introduction and brief overview

We investigate the internal syntax of parenthetical comment and reporting clauses, and potential generalizations over various subtypes.[*] Thereby, we discuss word order patterns, the nature of possible argument gaps, and the interpretation and position of elements such as *zo/so* and *zoals/wie/as* primarily in Dutch, while pointing out striking parallels with German and English, as well as some differences between the three languages.

A classic puzzle concerns the position of the finite verb in intercalated or utterance-final comment clauses. Three variants are attested: apparent V1, V2, and V-final (modulo extraposed elements). This is illustrated in Dutch in (1a-c), where the relevant verb is underlined. Similar word order patterns are used in German.

(1)   a.   Bob is, <u>vermoed</u>  ik, een echte charmeur.
           Bob is  suspect    I   a    true   charmer
           'Bob is, I suspect, a true charmer.'

      b.   Bob is, zo <u>vermoed</u>   ik, een echte charmeur.
           Bob is  so suspect     I   a    true   charmer
           'Bob is, so I suspect, a true charmer.'

      c.   Bob is, zoals ik al        <u>vermoedde</u>,  een echte charmeur.
           Bob is  as    I  already suspected     a    true   charmer
           'Bob is, as I already suspected, a true charmer.'

Such comment clauses, and reporting clauses likewise, have a parenthetical status. The zero hypothesis, then, is that they are main clauses, which trigger verb second in Dutch, *unless* there is an internal complementizer that gives rise to a subordinate clause pattern with a final verb. Indeed, examples (1a/b) clearly show an interrupting main clause with an optional first element *zo*, which we analyze as a kind of operator. **Section 2** works out these claims. **Section 3** highlights the problem of the base position of the *zo*-operator, and discusses its interpretation and status in more detail. **Section 4** concerns the parenthetical type in (1c), which is somewhat different. Here, the word order is that of a subordinate clause. This is due to the fact that the complementizer position is occupied by the comparative *als*. We

argue that this element may fuse with the moved operator *zo*. Furthermore, we make a comparison of the Dutch construction type with English *as*-parentheticals and German *wie*-parentheticals. **Section 5** is the conclusion.


## 2. Verb second and the operator *zo/so/ø* in comment and reporting clauses

### 2.1. Introductory remarks and delimitations

Comment and reporting clauses can occur in various positions, as is illustrated in (2a-c). In (2a) the assertion can be that Bob is a real charmer (depending on the context); in (2b/c) this is necessarily the case. However, there are more important qualitative differences between the initial position on the one hand, and the medial or non-derived final position on the other hand. The last two involve parenthetical insertion of the comment/report clause within the host sentence, whereas (2a) involves regular subordination of the communicated proposition under the commenting/reporting verb.[1] It is only the parenthetical construction type that we are interested in, for reasons that will become clear shortly.

(2)    a.    i)    *I suspect* (that) Bob is a real charmer.    [initial position]
            ii)    *Anna said*: "Bob is a real charmer".
            iii)    *Anna said* (that) Bob is a real charmer.

        b.    i)    Bob, *I suspect*, is a real charmer.    [medial position]
            ii)    "Bob", *said Anna*, "is a real charmer".

        c.    i)    Bob is a real charmer, *I suspect*.    [final position]
            ii)    "Bob is a real charmer", *said Anna*.

As a preliminary precaution, note that a final position of the comment or report clause can sometimes be *derived* from the initial position simply by topicalizing the object clause (of course, it requires some context to make this felicitous). This is not what we are after; see further below, and see also Griffiths (this volume) for relevant discussion of such potential confusion. Notice, incidentally, that contrastive topics or preposed foci can easily be detected by a so-called 'B-accent' on the preposed object, that is, an L+H*L-H% intonational contour, as was pointed out already in Jackendoff (1972).

    In Dutch, there are clear (morpho)syntactic differences between main and subordinate clauses, which makes it easier to distinguish the relevant cases than in English. In (3a), there is an obligatory complementizer *dat* 'that', and the finite verb *is* 'is' is in the final position; this is typical for subordinate clauses. In (3b), the comment clause happens to be linearly final. Still, it is clearly the matrix itself, considering that the first (associated) clause is formally a subordinate clause in every respect, similarly to the situation in (3a). Therefore, (3b) must involve clausal topicalization, and we can set it aside as a derivational variant of (3a) that is irrelevant to the present discussion.

(3)    a.    *Ik vermoed*    dat  Bob een echte charmeur is.    [initial position => subordinative]
            I    suspect    that Bob a    true   charmer   is

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[1] In various examples, we transparently use the verb *say* as a (directly) reporting verb, but evidently it can also function as a parenthetical verb in a comment clause, depending on the context. In (i), for instance, *said Anna* can be taken to mean 'according to Anna'. The exact phrasing of the host is, however, the responsibility of the current speaker, not *Anna*.

        (i)    Bob is a real charmer, said Anna.

In other words, a parenthetical verb construction is necessarily an epistemic or evidential comment if the host is not a direct quote. We will return to this issue.

b.     Dat Bob een echte charmeur is *vermoed ik*.       [derived final pos. => subordinative]
        that Bob a     true    charmer   is suspect I

By contrast, the comment clauses in (4a/b) are parenthetically construed in a sentence-medial or final position, and hence do not directly participate in the syntax of the the host clause. Here, the host is a main clause, as is evidenced by V2 and the absence of a complementizer.[2]

(4)    a.     Bob is, *vermoed   ik*, een echte charmeur.               [parenthetical]
           Bob is   suspect    I    a     true    charmer

       b.     Bob is een echte charmeur, *vermoed   ik*.     [non-derived final pos. => parenthetical]
           Bob is a     true    charmer    suspect    I

Let us briefly highlight four differences between the subordinative and the parenthetical verb construction, illustrated in (3) versus (4):[3]

- The verb *vermoeden* 'suspect' is obligatorily transitive. In (3), it takes a clausal object, and the sentence is overtly complete. In (4), however, the internal argument of the parenhetical verb seems to be lacking.
- Example (3a) displays the standard word order pattern in simple main clauses: S–V2–O; in (3b) there is subject-verb inversion due to topicalization. Surprisingly, the parenthetical comment clauses in (4a/b) also show obligatory subject-verb inversion, resulting in V1.
- The subordinative construction in (3) leads to prosodic integration of the embedded material with the matrix verb; here, the object clause contains the sentence accent. By contrast, parentheticals as in (4) *can* always be prosodically isolated, and, crucially, they never attract the sentence accent, independently of the question whether they contain a pitch accent of their own.[4]
- The subordinative construction has a canonical word order as in (3a), with the selecting verb adjacent to the object clause. Their relative positions can only be altered due to well-defined movements of either the verb (say, V2 in more complex main clauses) or the object clause (e.g., topicalization as in (3b)). By contrast, in parenthetical verb constructions there is no designated syntactic position for comment clauses: like regular parentheticals, they have no predefined structural position. Where exactly they surface is primarily determined by pragmatic and prosodic

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[2] Depending on the intonation (recall the remarks below (2c)), the word order pattern in (4b) might alternatively be derived by topicalizing an embedded V2 clause without a complementizer. Although this cannot be excluded for certain examples in German (e.g., *vermuten* 'suspect' allows for an embedded V2 complement clause), it is highly unlikely in Dutch, where apparent cases of embedded V2 are much less frequent, and generally perceived as a performance-related restart of the sentence rather than a grammatical construction type.

In addition, we should note that Ross's (1973) famous 'slifting' (sentence lifting) analysis is in fact untenable for parenthetical comment and reporting clauses. First, this would require stipulative operations that move a regular subordinate clause from its purported base position as the complement of the 'parenthetical' verb, formally turn it into a main clause and change the original matrix into a parenthetical – hence transforming (3a) into (4b), for instance. Second, intermediate positions for parentheticals, as in (4a), can simply not be derived in this way. For more discussion, see Reis (1995, 2002), Van Maastricht (2011), and Griffiths (this volume), among others.

[3] In this contribution, we do not consider the possibility of 'initial parentheticals', but see Blanche-Benveniste (1989), among others, for a different take on the (then apparent) subordinative construction. For the reasons indicated in the main text, it is clear, however, that the two construction types have different properties, and our analysis only targets the parenthetical one.

[4] See Dehé (2009) and Güneş & Çöltekin (this volume) for current studies on the prosody of parentheses.

considerations. Next to the final position in (4b), various intermediate positions are possible, as in (4a), for instance.[5]

Thus, it is clear that parenthetical comment clauses must be distinguished from subordinative constructions, and also that they display properties that require further explanation. Analogously, we can safely assume the same for reporting clauses.

Comment clauses can sometimes be interpreted at the constituent level rather than at the sentence level, depending on the right intonational grouping. This is illustrated in (5) and (6) for English and Dutch, respectively:

(5)  a.  John gave the book to [I think Mary], yesterday.
     b.  John gave the book to [Mary, I think,] yesterday.

(6)  a.  Jan heeft het boek gisteren   aan [ik dacht     Marie] gegeven.
         Jan has   the book yesterday to   I  thought Marie  given
     b.  Jan heeft het boek gisteren   aan [Marie,   dacht    ik,] gegeven.
         Jan has   the book yesterday to   Marie   thought I    given

Griffiths (to appear) argues that such intrusive constructions are 'fragment amalgams', in line with Kluck's (2011, 2013) analysis of Horn amalgamation, which involves clausal ellipsis (cf., *I think it was Mary* ~~who John gave the book to yesterday~~). In addition, he distinguishes between the subordinative and the parenthetical kind of fragment amalgam, parallel to the difference between (3) and (4) above. Accordingly, only (5b) and (6b) involve parenthetical attachment of the comment clause within its local syntactic environment – irrespectively of how complex that might be. What is relevant for us here, is that the internal structure of a parenthetical comment clause as *dacht ik* 'I thought' in (6b), for instance, is equivalent to that in (4).

Finally, it is worth mentioning that the 'gap' in reporting and comment parentheticals does not necessarily involve the direct object; in exceptional cases, it can also be the subject, as is illustrated with Dutch examples in (7):

(7)  a.  "Bob is", (zo) werd gezegd,  "een  echte charmeur."
          Bob is  so   was  said      a   true  charmer
         ' "Bob is", so [it] was said, "a true charmer".'
     b.  Bob is, (zo) wordt algemeen aangenomen,   een echte charmeur.
         Bob is  so   is      generally  assumed         a   true  charmer
         'Bob is, so [it] is generally believed, a true charmer.'
     c.  Bob had, (zo) was   wel           duidelijk, een blunder begaan.
         Bob had  so   was   AFFIRMATIVE clear       a   blooper done
         'Bob had, [this] was clear, made a blooper.'
     d.  Bob had, zoals wel           duidelijk was, een blunder begaan.
         Bob had  as    AFFIRMATIVE clear        was  a   blooper done
         'Bob had , as was clear, made a blooper.'

The first two examples involve a passive construction, and the last two a copular construction with a propositional subject. In each case, the gap still counts as the internal argument of the predicate. For

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obvious reasons, a parenthetical gap cannot correspond to an external argument, since propositions or speech acts cannot be semantic Agents.

The construction types mentioned in (5) through (7) do not affect the analysis to be developed below, and we will set them aside in order to prevent unnecessary complications of exposition. In the remainder of this contribution, we will focus on the *internal* syntax of parenthetical reporting and comment clauses. We will simply take for granted that parentheticals are non-restrictive additions to the sentence, but evidently the *external* syntax of parentheticals more generally is a topic of interest as well; see the introductions in Dehé & Kavalova (2007) and Kluck, Ott & De Vries (to appear) for a general overview, and see De Vries (2012a), Griffiths & De Vries (2013), and Kluck (to appear a) for a more particular take on the matter.[6]

## 2.2. Word order and the optional presence of zo/so

With these preliminaries and delimitations in mind, let us now return to the primary examples, repeated in (8) for convenience:

(8)  a.  Bob is,  (zo) vermoed  ik,   een echte charmeur.
         Bob is   so  suspect   I    a    true  charmer

     b.  "Bob is",  (zo) zei    Anna,  "een  echte charmeur".
         Bob is     so  said   Anna   a    true  charmer

A number of questions concerning the internal structure of the parenthetical comment clause immediately arises:

- How can we explain the word order?
- Where is the internal argument?
- What is the status of the element *zo*?

In the remainder of this section and the next one, we will address these issues in more detail, starting with word order.

In the parentheticals in (8), the finite verb and the subject are inverted. In Dutch, this is the only possible order:[7]

(9)  a.  * Bob is, ik vermoed, een echte charmeur.
     b.  * Bob is, zo ik vermoed, een echte charmeur.

(10) a.  * "Bob is", Anna zei, "een echte charmeur."
     b.  * "Bob is", zo Anna zei, "een echte charmeur."

By extending the comment or reporting clause, it can easily be shown that it is a main clause. As already indicated in the introduction, this is also what one would expect by default for a parenthetical. In (11), adverbials follow the inverted subject, suggesting that the verb is in the regular position for finite verbs

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[6] We envision structural incorporation of parentheses as a kind of non-restrictive adjuncts with respect to the host by means of a distinct syntactic operation (Parenthetical Merge) that enables linear integration at the PF-interface, but blocks c-command relationships, thus ensuring semantic 'orphanage' in effect.

[7] In English, subject-verb inversion in such parentheticals is dependent on the predicate, and it is never obligatory. It can be considered a remnant of V2 in an earlier stage of the language. For an illustration, see (16) below in the main text.

in main clauses. If so, we expect it to shift to the final verb position when we insert an additional auxiliary. This is indeed the case, as is shown in (12).

(11)  a.  Bob is, (zo) vermoed  ik al       lange tijd,  een echte charmeur.
          Bob is  so  suspect   I  already  long  time  a    true  charmer
          'Bob is, I've suspected for a long time now, a true charmer.'

      b.  "Ik wil   met  je   dansen",  (zo) zei  Bob gisteren.
          I    want  with  you  dance      so  said  Bob yesterday
          ' "I want to dance with you", Bob said yesterday.'

(12)  a.  Bob is, (zo) <u>heb</u>  ik al       lange tijd  <u>vermoed</u>,  een echte charmeur.
          Bob is  so  have I  already  long  time  suspected   a    true  charmer
      b.  "Ik wil   met  je   dansen",  (zo) <u>heeft</u> Bob gisteren  <u>gezegd</u>.
          I    want  with  you  dance      so  has    Bob yesterday  said

The word order pattern with both left and right verbal 'sentence brackets' (Dutch 'polen', German 'Satzklammern') is typical for main clauses. In a subordinate clause all verbs surface in the final position:[8]

(13)  ... dat  Bob  dat   gisteren   <u>gezegd</u>  <u>heeft</u>.
          that bob  that  yesterday  said      has

In comment and reporting clauses, the element *zo* always surfaces in the first position, immediately followed by the finite verb. This implies that an adverbial cannot precede *zo* or intervene between the fixed elements; see (14), for instance:

(14)  Bob is, (*eigenlijk) zo (*eigenlijk) vermoed ik (eigenlijk),  een echte charmeur.
      Bob is    actually   so  actually   suspect  I  actually    a    true  charmer

Evidently, these parentheticals show regular V2 effects associated with main clauses. However, if *zo* is absent, the verb is linearly first inside the parenthetical. As we have seen, the presence of *zo* is optional in Dutch. This is similar in German:[9]

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[8] Recall that in V2 languages, finite verbs are – at least descriptively – in complementary distribution with complementizers. See Den Besten (1977) and Zwart (1994) for elaborate discussion.

[9] We are aware of one potential counterexample, where the purported comment clause figures inside a question (cf. Steinbach 2007). The sentence is acceptable only without *so*:

(i)  Welches theorem, (*so) glaubt Hans, möchte    Martin beweisen?   [German]
     which    theorem  so    believes Hans  would.like  Martin prove

The reason might be that an overt anaphoric relationship with an open set of referents is inherently problematic. However, it is not immediately clear to us why an alternative analysis in terms of extraction from an embedded V2 clause would be excluded here. If so, there is no comment clause to begin with, hence no *so*; and it is also clear why the equivalent in Dutch is eschewed altogether (as Dutch virtually lacks embedded V2; cf. footnote 2). Furthermore, we would predict that a different site of attachment is excluded, which is correct:

(ii)  * Welches theorem möchte, glaubt Hans, Martin beweisen?

This contrasts with the situation in declarative contexts. For instance, (15a) can be rephrased as (iii):

(iii)  Hans  möchte,  (so) glaubt  Martin, das Theorem  beweisen.
       Hans  would.like  so  believes Martin  the  theorem  prove

(15) a.  Hans,  (so) glaubt  Martin,  möchte  das Theorem  beweisen.
         Hans  so  believes Martin  would.like the  theorem  prove
         'Hans, Martin thinks, would like to prove the theorem.'
     b.  "Hans ist", (so) sagte Martin, "ein richtiger Charmeur".
          Hans is  so  said Martin a  true  charmer
         ' "Hans is", (so) said Martin, "a true charmer".'

In English, the use of *so* is more restricted due to the fact that it can only surface with those predicates that allow for subject-verb inversion, which is relatively rare because of the general loss of V2 in this language. Nevertheless, in the relevant cases, *so* is optionally present as well (albeit slightly archaic):

(16) a.  "John is", (so) said Mary, "a real charmer".
     b.  "John is", (so) Mary said, "a real charmer".

Thus, the pattern is quite consistent.

In the absence of *zo/so*, the verb is arguably still in the same structural position. Consider the Dutch data. First, there is S–V inversion, and second, nothing else can be preposed/topicalized. Compare (17) to (14), for instance:

(17) Bob is, (*eigenlijk) vermoed  ik (eigenlijk),  een echte charmeur.
     Bob is  actually  suspect  I  actually  a  true  charmer

By contrast, in regular declarative main clauses, adverbs can be put in the first position without any difficulty:

(18) Eigenlijk vermoedde ik dat al.
     actually  suspected  I  that already
     'Actually, I already suspected that.'

An obvious way to account for all these data is to assume that the relevant *zo*-less parentheticals are only *apparently* V1, and have the same syntactic structure as V2 parentheticals. This implies that there is a silent counterpart of *zo/so*. Thus, we postulate a clause-initial operator (OP) inside the parenthetical, in line with ideas by Collins & Branigan (1997) and various others concerning a 'quotative operator' in reporting clauses. This immediately explains the obligatory inversion of the subject and the finite verb in V2 languages, and we can maintain that the parenthetical is a *bona fide* V2 main clause:

(19) Bob is, OP/zo vermoed ik, een echte charmeur.

To be perfectly clear, we cannot assume an abstract operator in *addition* to *zo* because there is only one available first position.

Apparent V1 in parentheticals can now be compared to various other V1 main clauses for which silent material has been proposed: *yes/no* questions, imperatives, topic drop, and so on. See the examples in (20), for instance:

(20) a.  Heb  jij  dit  boek gelezen?
         have  you this  book  read?
         'Have you read this book?'

b.    Lees  dit  boek!
       read  this book
       'Read this book!'

c.    Heb  ik  al        gelezen.
       have  I   already  read
       'I've read [it] already.'

The question then is where the operator in (19) – whether overt *zo* or silent *OP* – originates and what it means. It appears that we can relate this to another issue, namely the absence of the internal argument. As we already noticed above, many verbs of communication and cognition are obligatorily transitive and normally take a clausal or (pro)nominal complement; see (21):[10]

(21)  a.    Ik  vermoed  [$_{DP}$ dit/iets]      /  [$_{CP}$ dat Bob Bea kent]   /  *ø .
          I   suspect      this/something     that Bob Bea knows     *ø

     b.    Ik  zei  [$_{DP}$ dit/iets]      /  [$_{CP}$ dat  Bob Bea kent]   /  "<citaat>"  /  *ø .
          I   said    this/something     that Bob Bea knows    <quote>      *ø

At least at first sight, this strongly suggests that *OP/zo* in a comment or reporting clause is somehow associated with the internal argument of the parenthetical verb. Semantically, the pronominal *OP/zo* is anaphoric to the host clause. It may thus be considered a pronominal placeholder for the proposition or speech act expressed by the host (depending on whether it concerns direct quotation or not); compare *I think so*, *he said so*, or *I don't believe that*. A reasonable first hypothesis to test is therefore that *OP/zo* syntactically instantiates the internal argument. As such, it can be generated in the regular object position, and subsequently be A´-moved to the first position (SpecCP, i.e., the specifier position of the complementizer phrase), which results in an argument variable. This idea is depicted in (22):

(22)  a.    Bob is, OP$_i$/zo$_i$ vermoed ik $t_i$ , een echte charmeur.
     b.    "Bob is", OP$_i$/zo$_i$ zei Bea $t_i$ , "een echte charmeur".

In section 3, we will suggest an alternative variant, in which OP/*zo* is generated as a low adverb (related to a potential manner interpretation of *zo/so*). What is relevant for now is that both analyses require topicalization of OP/*zo*, which should be detectable by standard movement diagnostics.[11] Chomsky (1977) presents island sensitivity and unboundedness as hallmark characteristics of A´-movement. Expectedly, this is what we find (see also suggestions in Potts 2002 and De Vries 2006). Example (24), for instance, would involve movement out of a complex noun phrase, which is unacceptable; compare a textbook example as in (23).

(23)   * What$_i$ did you talk to someone who suspected $t_i$ ?

(24)   * Bob is, OP/zo$_i$ sprak ik [iemand die    vermoedde $t_i$],  een echte charmeur.
       Bob is OP/so spoke I  someone who  suspected     a   true  charmer

Similarly, movement across a complex NP boundary is barred in reporting clauses:

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[10] Here, DP stands for 'determiner phrase', and CP for 'complementizer phrase' (i.e., a full clause).

[11] An issue that we will leave aside here, is the general question what triggers displacement in A´-movement constructions. A common theoretical assumption is that operators (whether overt or covert) are assigned an abstract feature (for instance, [+wh], [+rel], [+top]) that needs to be checked in the complementizer domain. The explanatory power of this is limited, however, and it is being called into question in current Minimalist thinking.

(25)  * "Bob is", $OP_i$/$zo_i$ ken   ik [iemand   die    gezegd $t_i$ had], "een  echte charmeur".
         Bob is  Op/so  know I    someone who   said        had   a    true  charmer

Crucially, it is not the case that long distance movement is excluded per se. Unbounded movement of an object across bridge verbs is acceptable (26); and this is also the case in parenthetical constructions; see (27) and (28), which contrast clearly with (24) and (25):

(26)   $What_i$ did you say/hear/claim [that John bought $t_i$ today]?

(27)   Bob is, $OP_i$/$zo_i$ hoorde ik  [dat Piet vermoedde $t_i$ ], een  echte charmeur.
       Bob is  OP/so   heard I    that Piet suspected       a    true  charmer

(28)   "Bob is",   $OP_i$/$zo_i$ beweerde Piet [dat Anna gezegd $t_i$  had], "een  echte charmeur".
        Bob is      Op/so  claimed    Piet that Anna said       had   a    true   charmer

Thus, there is evidence for A′-movement of *OP/zo*,[12] which corroborates the proposal in (22).[13] Notice also that these facts are highly problematic for alternative approaches that make reference to an implicit, syntactically suppressed argument variable that is non-canonically licensed in semantics (Reis 1995, Steinbach 2007), which would lead to 'genuine V1'; see also Fortmann (2007) for critical discussion.[14]

    A further advantage of the proposed view is that we can link it to the phenomenon of topic drop, a possibility also discussed in the literature just mentioned. For pronominal arguments in Dutch, it is the case that they can be dropped on two conditions: the first is an obvious requirement of contextual (or deictic) recoverability, the second is that the (usually demonstrative) pronoun must be moved to the first position before deletion, and – relatedly – can function as the sentence topic. This is shown in (29). The *in situ* pronoun in (29a) cannot be dropped, but if it is fronted (29b), it can be:

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[12] In German, the corresponding judgments for unbounded movement appear to be slightly less clear. According to our informants, a complex comment clause is acceptable (i) – depending on the right context –, but a complex reporting clause is quite marginal (ii):

(i)   Peter ist, so habe  ich  gehört  dass Anna  behauptet hat, ein  echter   Charmeur.
      Peter is   so have  I    heard   that Anna  claimed   has  a    true      charmer

(ii) ?? "Peter ist",  so behauptete Hans dass Anna gesagt  hätte, "ein echter   Charmeur".
        Peter is     so claimed     Hans that Anna said    had    a    true      charmer

Despite this, there is still a contrast with complex parentheticals containing island boundaries (comparable to the Dutch examples in (24) and (25) in the main text), which are completely unacceptable, as expected.

[13] Further evidence can be obtained by studying particular properties of individual languages. For instance, Irish complementizers have different possible morphological realizations (cf. McCloskey 1979 and subsequent work), which distinguish between regular and A′-movement contexts (the 'agreeing' type, where SpecCP is filled). James Griffiths (p.c.) informed us that in parenthetical constructions, the second type is used, which is in accord with our expectations. For reasons of space, we cannot go into detail, here.

[14] In Fortmann's (2007) own proposal, there is an empty *pro*-form in the parenthetical object position, which stays *in situ*. He argues rightly against base-generation of the eventual main clause as the parenthetical internal argument and subsequent deletion or movement (see also footnote 2 for discussion). However, this cannot be taken as evidence that there is no A′-movement at all. As we showed in the main text, it is the *pro*-form/operator that is moved.

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(29)  *about a particular book:*
    a.    Ik  heb   *(dat)  gelezen.
            I   have    that  read
    b.    (Dat$_i$) heb ik $t_i$ gelezen.

Note that fronting can be detected even if the object is silent because of subject-verb inversion in combination with V1 (i.e., it is not another constituent that is topicalized). Topic drop can be considered as a special kind of ellipsis, brought about by deletion at the phonological interface (PF). Unlike core syntactic processes, it is optional and context-dependent – that is, the possibility of topic drop is conditional (hence depending on certain discourse conditions, it can but need not be done).

    So far, we established a number of things concerning *zo*. Firstly, the realization of *zo* is optional. At least in Dutch, *all* apparent V1 parentheticals can be optionally turned into overt V2 parentheticals by spelling out *OP* as *zo*, and *vice versa*. Secondly, we noticed that *zo* is anaphoric, hence pronominal (demonstrative, even), and its antecedent is clearly recoverable, as it involves the immediate syntactic context. Thirdly, we argued that *zo* is fronted within the parenthetical. To this we can add that a comment clause is rather obviously about what it comments upon, and a reporting clause is about what it reports. Therefore, *zo* can be considered the sentence topic. All conditions for topic drop are fulfilled, and hence the morpho-phonological realization of *zo* will be optional. It should be emphasized that whether topic drop of *zo* applies or not, is arbitrary for our assumptions: if *zo* is dropped at PF, there will still be an empty operator with the same syntactic and semantic function.[15]

    Note that Steinbach (2007) presents a few arguments against a topic drop analysis, which we think fail on closer inspection. First, he assumes that a topical *d*-pronoun would compete with the optional *so* for the first position, which is impossible. However, we do not postulate an additional demonstrative: *so* itself is the sentence topic. The fact that *so/zo* cannot replace *das/dat/that* in all contexts (Steinbach 2007:71/2, fn.15) is irrelevant. Due to its operator status in the pertinent examples, we do not expect *so* to surface *in situ* (*Martin glaubt das/*so* [German] 'M. believes that'). Furthermore, the example *Das/*so glaube ich nicht* [German] 'I don't think so', if anything, can rather be interpreted as an argument in favor of the '*so*-drop' analysis because the corresponding negative parenthetical is unacceptable, too.[16] Secondly, and this is a more fundamental issue, Steinbach argues at length that the

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[15] Interestingly, there appears to be a small gray area between comment clauses and certain *and*-parenheticals (or quasi-coordinative parentheses), namely those in which a clause-anaphoric demonstrative is topicalized, where the predicate coincides with a comment or reporting verb, and where the coordinator can be left out (resulting in parenthetical juxtaposition). A minimal quadruple is provided in the examples (i) through (iv):

    (i)    De  directeur  had – en   dat geloofden wij  allen –  gefraudeerd.
           the  manager  had   and that believed  we   all      committed.fraud
           'The manager had – and we all believed that – committed fraud.'
    (ii)    De directeur had – dat geloofden wij allen – gefraudeerd.
    (iii)   De directeur had, zo geloofden wij allen, gefraudeerd.
    (iv)   De directeur had, geloofden wij allen, gefraudeerd.

It is hard to tell whether the regular comment clause in (iv) is derived from topic drop in (ii) or (iii), and it is likely that both options are possible. Nevertheless, it is clear that the similarity between these sentences is accidental. Generally, comment clauses cannot be transformed into *and*-parentheticals or *vice versa* at all; and usually an overt *zo/so* in a comment clause cannot be replaced by *dat/das*. Therefore, the claim in the main text is justified that topic drop in parenthetical verb constructions normally involves the operator *zo/so* and not a preposed *d*-pronoun.

[16] One may wonder why topic drop in negative sentences is allowed in certain non-parenthetical contexts, but not in parentheticals, as illustrated in (i) and (ii). However, as (iii) shows, the parenthetical is not acceptable with an overt pronoun, either; so the question is misguided.

antecedent of the dropped pronoun is (or can be) an assertion and does not have a discourse-topical status. If we are not mistaken, this is a misunderstanding of the topic drop phenomenon: it is the dropped pronoun itself which must be the sentence topic, the antecedent does not need to be topical. If it is not, we are facing a shift of topic, which is perfectly possible, at least with sentential antecedents, and probably in various other cases as well:

(30)    A:    Mieke is leuk.              B:    ~~Dat~~ vind  ik  ook.
               Mieke is nice                    ~~that~~ think  I   too
               'Mieke is nice'                  'I agree.'

(31)    A:    Mieke  vond  het  boek  interessant.       B:    ~~Dat~~ is  het  ook.
               Mieke  found the  book  interesting              ~~that~~ is  is   PRT
               'Mieke found the book interesting.'            'It certainly is.'

See also De Korte (2008) for examples and discussion.

To summarize, we showed that all regular comment and reporting parentheticals are V2 main clauses (but see section 4 concerning *as*-parentheticals). There is a clause-initial operator which can be either null due to topic drop or it can be spelled out as *so/zo*. This explains subject-verb inversion in Dutch and other V2 languages, as well as the appparent V1 pattern in case an empty operator is used. Adverbs and other elements can be part of the parenthetical, but they cannot be preposed. We argued that the operator is A′-moved, and also suggested that it might originate as the apparently missing internal argument of the parenthetical verb, which is consistent with the anaphoric function of *OP/zo*. The next section discusses certain complications for this view, and introduces an potential solution.


**3. More on the interpretation and base position of *zo/so***

In the examples used so far, the parenthetical verb is transitive, and there appears to be an empty internal argument with which *zo/OP* is associated. It may therefore come as a surprise that we find reporting clauses *without* an available argument position, either because the verb is intransitive, or because the argument slot is already filled with another noun phrase. These possibilities are illustrated in (32), based on earlier observations in Schelfhout (2006) and De Vries (2006).

(32)  a.    "Bob is", (zo) ontplofte  Mieke, "een  gemene  charmeur!"
             Bob is    so exploded Mieke   a     nasty    charmer
             ' "Bob is a nasty charmer," Mieke exploded.'

      b.    "Dit  is  waardeloos",  (zo) becommentarieerde  ze   mijn  artikel.
             this is  worthless          so commented.on         she  my    article
             ' "This is worthless", she commented on my article.'

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      (i)    A:    Jan is ziek.       B:    ~~Dat~~ geloof  ik  **niet**.
                   Jan is ill               that believe  I    not

      (ii)   # Jan is ziek, ~~zo/dat~~ geloof  ik  **niet**.
             Jan is ill       so/that believe  I   not

      (iii)  # Jan is ziek, zo/dat geloof ik **niet**.

We think the reason why (ii) and (iii) are out is simply that there is only one speaker involved, contrary to the situation in (i). Therefore, the negative parenthetical, whether it involves topic drop or not, would lead to self-contradiction, which is pragmatically odd. Hence, this issue, however interesting in itself, is irrelevant for the argumentation in the main text.

The verb *ontploffen* 'explode' in (32a), is unaccusative, hence intransitive. Consequently *OP/zo* cannot be analyzed as the direct object. But is this firm conclusion true? We acknowledge that the argument structure of lexical predicates is not always fixed, and can sometimes be used creatively. In this case, one might hypothesize that *ontploffen* 'explode' is syntactically (not just pragmatically) reinterpreted as 'say angrily', which would make it transitive. However, if that were possible, we would expect (33a-c) to become acceptable, too, which is definitely not the case:

(33)  a.  * Mieke  ontplofte  een  vloek.
             Mieke  exploded  a    curse
             '[*]Mieke exploded a curse.'

    b.  * Mieke  ontplofte  dat  Bob  gemeen  deed.
             Mieke  exploded  that  Bob  mean     did
             '[*]Mieke exploded that Bob was doing mean.'

    c.  * Mieke  ontplofte  "Ga weg!"
             Mieke  exploded    go  away
             '[*]Mieke exploded "Go away!"

The problem thus stands as it is. Furthermore, a flexible view on transitivity would not solve the issue in (32b), where there *is* an object slot, but it is taken by the noun phrase *mijn artikel* 'my article'. We would like to stress that the relevant data are not a quirk of Dutch; comparable examples were tested in French and Spanish by Van Maastricht (2011), and judged acceptable by most speakers.

    Crucially, the meaning of *zo* shifts to a manner interpretation in (32). Example (32a), for instance, indicates roughly that the way Mieke exploded is by saying "Bob is a nasty charmer". Notably , a manner interpretation of *zo* is independently available; see (34):

(34)  Ik  heb    het  zo  gedaan.
      I    have  it    so  done
      'I did it in that way.'

The pronominal manner adverb *zo* is either deictic or anaphoric. Notice that it can also be topicalized/fronted:

(35)  Zo$_i$  heb    ik  het  $t_i$ gedaan.
      so    have  I    it      done
      'In that way, I did it.'

For these reasons, it makes sense to analyze *OP/zo* as an anaphoric manner adverbial rather than a direct object in (32).

    Importantly, there is evidence for A´-movement even in these cases. First of all, it is evident that there is subject-verb inversion. But we can also show that the construction is island-sensitive, for instance. This is illustrated in (36):

(36)  * "Bob is", zo$_i$  sprak ik [iemand    die    $t_i$ ontplofte],   "een  gemene  charmeur".
       Bob  is    so    spoke I    someone who    exploded     a     nasty     charmer
       '[*]"Bob is", so did I speak to someone who exploded, "a nasty charmer!"'

The structure for (32) is therefore as sketched in (37). As always, the subject is moved from its argumental base position within the verb phrase to the structural subject position, and the finite verb is

moved to the second position. Furthermore, *OP/zo* is generated as a manner adverbial, which could be adjoined to the verb phrase (or have its own projection in the sentential spine – that is irrelevant for our purposes), and consequently fronted within the parenthetical, similarly to the situation in (35).

(37)  "Bob is", OP/zo$_i$ ontplofte$_v$ Mieke$_s$ [$_{VP}$ $t_i$ [$_{VP}$ $t_v$ $t_s$]], "een gemene charmeur".

Thus, there is a clear solution for the cases in (32), which seemed problematic at first sight.

We now have to consider at least the possibility that *zo* is *always* a manner adverb, even in regular parentheticals of the type in (8), where an object position *is* available. One might speculate that *OP/zo* is able to license an empty argument in those cases, as suggested earlier for reporting clauses in De Vries (2006). In (38a/b), *[e]* indicates the empty internal argument of *vermoeden* 'suspect' and *zeggen* 'say', respectively; *t* is the original position of the fronted adverb *OP/zo*.

(38)  a.    Bob is, OP/zo$_i$ vermoed   ik  $t_i$ [e]$_i$,  een echte charmeur.
            Bob is op/so  suspect    I          a    true  charmer
            'Bob is, I suspect, a true charmer.'
      b.    "Bob is",  OP/zo$_i$ zei  Anna  $t_i$ [e]$_i$,  "een  echte charmeur".
            Bob  is    op/zo  said Anna        a    true  charmer
            'Bob is, Anna said, a true charmer.'

Interestingly, the configuration is reminiscent of parasitic gap constructions: the moved operator c-commands both its trace (the adverb position) and the empty argument slot.[17] A common example of a parasitic gap is (39):

(39)  [Welk  boek]$_i$ heb  je   opgeborgen $t_i$ zonder [e]$_i$ te lezen?
       which  book   have you  filed               without    to read
       'Which book did you file without reading?'

Thus, we might hypothesize that the operator is also directly related to both variables in (38). We leave further discussion of the parallel with parasitic gap constructions open here.

There is additional evidence that *OP/zo* can be used as an adverb. Fortmann (2007:99ff) shows that in prosodically unintegrated parentheticals in German, *so* can be combined with an object pronoun *es*, with certain restrictions; see (40). It seems that such examples combine two types of anaphoric relations, namely reference to a proposition as well as the way it is expressed (the speech act).

(40)  Theo kam – **so** sagt  **es** Paul – mit   seinem Hund.              [German]
      Theo came  so said  it Paul   with  his    dog
      'Theo brought – so says Paul – his dog.'

It is somewhat difficult to find similar types of examples in Dutch, but they do exist, especially in explicit contexts of so-called *mixed quotation* (where, again, mention and use overlap). This is illustrated in (41), where *het* 'it' must be prosodically weak. On a side-note, the German word order with the pronoun preceding the subject is impossible in Dutch.

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[17] There is also a difference: in parasitic gap constructions such as (39), there is no c-command between the two variables (the trace and the gap). In (38), however, it seems that *t* c-commands [e], depending on the details of the analysis. We will not elaborate on this issue, here.

(41)　Anna　was　helemaal　　'flabbergasted', **zo**　zei　Bea **het**　althans.
　　　　Anna　was　completely　flabbergasted　　so　　said　Bea　it　　at.least
　　　　'Anna was completely "flabbergasted", at least, that's how Bea put it.'

In this sentence, too, *zo* can only be understood in the manner reading. This is precisely what is expected on our analysis.[18]
　　　In (40) and (41) a verb of communication (*say*) is used as a comment, a possibility we already commemorated in footnote 1. In the German example in (42), which we owe to an anonymous reviewer, *so* has a pertinent manner interpretation, too. Here, the object position is occupied by a full noun phrase, comparable to the situation for reporting clauses in (32b). Although we have trouble assigning a non-quotative meaning to the equivalent in Dutch, we accept a parenthetical as in (43) as a comment.

(42)　Der Minister, so erzählte man die　Geschichte,　habe　plagiiert.
　　　　the　minister　so　told　　one　the　story　　　has　　plagiarized
　　　　'The minister, so people told the story, has plagiarized.'

(43)　Bob heeft, zo deed　het　verhaal de　　ronde,　een　grote　vis　　gevangen.
　　　　Bob has　so　did　　the　story　the　tour　　a　　big　　fish　caught
　　　　'Bob caught a big fish, so the story went.'

It should be noted, however, that a forced manner reading of *zo* due to the lack of an available object position is not available in comment clauses with a regular epistemic verb. Since *vermoeden* 'suspect' in (44) is a transitive verb, an overt object like *een complot* 'a conspiracy' might be expected to occur next to adverbial *zo*. However, such is not the case.

(44)　* Bob ging,　zo vermoedde Bea een complot,　　weleens　　　vissen.
　　　　 Bob went　so　suspected　Bea　a　　conspiracy　sometimes　fish.INF
　　　　 '[*] Bob went, so did Bea suspect a conspiracy, fishing once in a while.'

It seems to us that this restriction is due to the interpretation of the predicate. Verbs of communication can easily be modified with a manner adverb. Therefore, such predicates can be part of a *wh*-question with manner-*how*; see (45a). By contrast, predicates with an inherent epistemic import cannot be modified in such a way; see (45b). For ease of representation, we illustrate in English, but the observation extends to Dutch straightforwardly.

(45)　a.　　A:　How did Bea report the conspiracy / that there was a conspiracy?
　　　　　　　B:　Reluctantly.
　　　　b.　　A:　How did Bea suspect the conspiracy / that there was a conspiracy?
　　　　　　　B: # Reluctantly.

Thus, comment clauses are slightly more restricted in use than reporting clauses.
　　　To wrap up, in this section we have elaborated on the interpretation and position of *zo*, taking our assumption that *zo* is an operator in section 2 as a point of departure. We have demonstrated a shift to

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[18] Although the present work is limited to comment and reporting parentheticals in Germanic languages, we would like to point out that Turkish data may offer additional evidence in favor of the present hypothesis. As Güliz Güneş (p.c.) pointed out, the word *öyle* 'so' can be used in Turkish reporting parenthetical clauses, but it is not inflected for accusative case, unlike other objects; this is indicative of an adverbial status. Clearly, however, this suggestion requires careful examination in the context of other related phenomena in Turkish.

manner-interpretation in case there is no internal argument position available in the parenthetical clause – a possibility in reporting clauses, but not in comment clauses. In the relevant cases, *OP/zo* may originate as an anaphoric manner adverb 'in this way'. When it is used as such, *OP/zo* is demonstrably A´-moved, as in regular parentheticals: it causes inversion, is sensitive to islands, and so on. Finally, we considered the possibility to generalize the solution for the problematic cases to all comment and reporting clauses. This would imply that *OP/zo* is always generated in an adverb position, and that it is able to license an empty object when needed. Given the suggested parallel with parasitic gaps, and other considerations, this seems a reasonable way to go, but at this stage of our research it is hard to tell what would be better from a theoretical point of view: a generalized but somewhat complex analysis, or a simpler analysis for regular cases, and a somewhat different analysis for the anomalous cases only.

## 4. *As/wie/zoals*-parentheticals

Let us now turn to *as/wie/zoals*-parentheticals, as announced in the introduction. Before anything else, it should be pointed out that these are a special variety of comment clauses; even examples in which the parenthetical verb is a verb of saying cannot have a quotative reading:[19]

(46)     Bob is, as Bea said, a true charmer.

Interestingly, *as*-parentheticals are consistently verb-final in German and Dutch, witness the following examples:

(47) a.     Bob is, zoals ik al       <u>vermoedde</u>,   een echte charmeur.        [Dutch]
            Bob is  as   I   already  suspected       a    true  charmer
     b.     Bob ist, wie ich  <u>vermutete</u>,  ein echter  Charmeur.        [German]
            Bob is  as   I    suspected       a   true      charmer
            'Bob is, as I already suspected, a true charmer.'

It has been widely acknowledged in the literature that the gaps in English *as*-parentheticals may correspond to CPs as well as any predicate-denoting phrase (Potts 2002, LaCara 2013). Dutch and German lack this last type of *as*-parentheticals. This follows straightforwardly if this type is analyzed in terms of verb phrase (VP)-ellipsis (LaCara 2013), since Dutch and German lack VP-ellipsis altogether. The discussion here is therefore restricted to the CP-gap type, in relation to the comment clauses discussed above. The primary issue we are concerned with is the aberrant V-final word order in these cases. Taking the analysis of *zo* as an operator further, we will argue that *als* ('as') is a complementizer. In addition, we

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[19] Consequently, examples with intransitive parenthetical verbs or transitive constructions with an occupied object slot are normally excluded because they only occur in true quotative contexts, as we discussed; see (i) and (ii). However, there are some possibilities with mixed quotation if a verb of communication is used; see (iii):

(i)    * Bob is,  zoals  Mieke ontplofte, een  gemene charmeur.
         Bob is    as     Mieke exploded   a    nasty   charmer
         '[*] Bob is, as Mieke exploded, a nasty charmer'

(ii)   * Bob is,  zoals  Mieke een complot    vermoeddde, een  gemene charmeur.
         Bob is    as     Mieke a    conspiracy suspected    a    nasty   charmer
         '[*] Bob is, as Mieke suspected a conspiracy, a nasty charmer.'

(iii)    Bob is,  zoals  Mieke het  zou     zeggen,  'een gemene charmeur'.
         Bob is    as     Mieke it   would say       a    nasty   charmer
         'Bob is a "nasty charmer", as Mieke would say it.'

will briefly discuss some cross-linguistic data and speculate about the implications of our proposal for the meaning of *as*-parentheticals.

Parentheses – by definition – are not hypotactically construed (i.e., subordinated with respect to the host) in the usual way. The zero hypothesis is therefore that they have 'root status' (in a pretheoretical sense), and by extension that clausal parentheticals classify as main clauses, unless there is an internal clue for a subordinated pattern.[20] The observed V2 (or V1) order in regular Dutch and German comment and reporting clauses – as well as *and*-parentheticals and the like (with or without an actual discourse linker) – comes as no surprise, then. However, the V-final order in (47) requires an explanation. We think that the Dutch complex form *zo-als* (lit. 'so' + 'as/if/like') provides an important clue. The basic idea is completely straightforward. Building on work by Hoekstra (1993) and Zwart (2000), we claim that *-als* is a complementizer. Since clauses introduced by a complementizer are necessarily V-final (Den Besten 1977), the word order in *zoals*-parentheticals (47a) and the regular Dutch *dat*-clause (48b) can be explained in a similar fashion:

(48)   a.      Bob <u>kuste</u> Bea.                    [V2]
               Bob kissed Bea
               'Bob kissed Bea.'

       b.      … dat Bob Bea <u>kuste</u>.              [V-final]
                 C    Bob  Bea  kissed
               '… that Bob kissed Bea.'

We take the ability for the morpheme *als* to introduce a finite, often complementizer-less clause as a clear argument that it is to be seen as the complementizer itself. Consequently, the clausal complement is then the inflectional or tense phrase (IP/TP), or a lower layer of CP if there are several shells (e.g., in *als-of* 'as if' comparative clauses).[21] Notice that this runs counter to assumptions in Emonds (1985), Potts (2002) and LaCara (2013), who take the English counterpart *as* to be a preposition with a CP complement, but without convincing evidence.[22] We do however concur with the idea that *as*-morphemes (in English as well as in Dutch and German) may denote *comparative* meaning as one of several interpretation types. Undoubtedly, *as*-parentheticals are comment clauses with a comparative meaning aspect.

The question is then how this can be reconciled with the idea that *zo* is an operator, which was central to the previous sections. Our hypothesis is as follows:

(49)   **Hypothesis**
       Z*oals* in Dutch *as*-parentheticals is a morpho-phonological combination of the operator *zo* and the complementizer *als*.

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[20] See Espinal (1991), among others, for extensive argumentation and further references concerning the 'root' status of parentheses (think of scopal independence, speaker orientation, and so on). De Vries (2012b) explicitly discusses the issue in the light of another interesting case, namely appositive relative clauses (which are V-final in Dutch) versus 'quasi-relatives' or 'V2-relatives'.

[21] Just to be clear, we do not claim that prepositional or other nonverbal elements cannot select for clauses per se. However, if they do, the selected clause is a CP with an overt at least active COMP domain in all cases we are aware of.

[22] Potts (2002:639) acknowledges that it is particularly difficult to establish prepositionhood of *as*-morphemes; the arguments suggested are merely indirect. Specifically, Potts draws a parallel between the use of *as* and the use of *than* in comparatives. Interestingly, some of the data concern inversion in English *than*- and *as*-clauses, reminiscent of inversion patterns traditionally associated with main clauses (Emonds 1976, Hooper & Thompson 1973). The fact that *than* and *as* pattern alike may reveal something about the type of clause they are associated with; it is not clear why this should imply that they are prepositions.

As was mentioned above, the interpretation of *zoals*-parentheticals involves a comparison of the contents of the host sentence with the understood embedded proposition – in (47a) what the subject of the parenthetical suspected. In our analysis, the latter is expressed by the anaphoric operator *zo*. Maintaining the general idea that comment clauses involve operator movement, the structure is then as in (50):

(50)    … [$_{CP}$ zo$_i$ [$_{C'}$ als [$_{IP}$ ik   al        vermoedde $t_i$ ]].
                so     as    I   already suspected
        '… as I suspected.'

The V-final pattern follows automatically because C, the position of the finite verb in V2 clauses, is occupied by an overt complementizer. The contrast in (51) follows directly from our assumptions as well:

(51)   a.      …, zo-als   ik gisteren    al        vermoedde, …
                    so-as    I   yesterday  already suspected
                '… as I already suspected yesterday, …'
       b.   * …, gisteren    zo-als   ik al        vermoedde, …
                    yesterday  so-as    I   already suspected

That is, preposed adverbials (or other phrases) give rise to ungrammaticality. This is expected for various reasons. If *zo* occupies SpecCP, there is no room for a topicalized phrase; apart from that, positioning of non-operator material directly before a lexical complementizer – *als*, in this case – is generally disallowed. We turn to a potential concern regarding the 'doubly filled COMP' filter below.

        It is worth mentioning that *zo-als* can sometimes be preceded by a modifier targeting *zo*, as is illustrated in (52):

(52)   …, [precies  zo]-als ik  al        vermoedde, …
            exactly   so-as   I   already   suspected

This nicely confirms the inherent phrasal status of OP/*zo*. In (52) it is the phrase *precies zo* 'exactly so' that is fronted.

        If it is indeed the case that *zo* in *zoals*-parentheticals is essentially the same operator as *zo* in comment clauses, we predict the same effects regarding unboundedness and island-sensitivity as were observed in (23)-(25) above. The data in (53) and (54) show that this is indeed the case:

(53)   …, **zo**$_i$-als   ik gehoord had [dat   Bob **t**$_i$ vermoedde], …
            so-as    I   heard    had  that  Piet    suspected
        '… as I heard that Bob suspected,…'

(54)   * …, **zo**$_i$-als   ik iemand    gesproken had   [die  **t**$_i$ vermoedde], …
            so-as    I   someone  spoken    had    who   suspected

Thus, movement of *zo* may cross the boundary of a finite clause (53) but is sensitive to islands – here a relative clause (54).

        The idea pursued here offers an interesting perspective for cross-linguistic comparison. As it turns out, there is some language variation. First, notice that the combination *so wie* ('so as') exists in German as well (55).  However, contrary to Dutch, the use of *so* is optional in the German *as*-parenthetical (56):

(55)  Bob ist, (so) wie ich vermutete, ein echter Charmeur.      [German]
      Bob is    so as I    suspected    a    true    charmer
      'Bob is, as I already suspected, a true charmer.'

(56)  Bob is, *(zo-) als ik vermoedde,  een echte charmeur.
      Bob is   so as I  expected       a   true  charmer
      'Bob is, as I expected, a true charmer.'

In present-day English the combination of *so as* no longer exists in the relevant sense:[23]

(57)  Bob is, (*so) as I suspected, a true charmer.

Nevertheless, it seems reasonable to generalize the approach suggested for Dutch to English, especially since English *as*, like Dutch *als*, can be used independently as a (temporal) complementizer:

(58)  I heard a dog barking as I rang Bob's doorbell.

Why the operator must remain silent in English is an issue that may be related to the Doubly Filled Comp Filter. This is a superficial constraint that states that only one position in the complementizer domain can be lexicalized, that is, either the C head or the SpecCP position. Relative clauses, for instance, can be introduced by a relative pronoun (e.g., *who*) or a complementizer (*that*), but not both (*\*who that*). Similarly, the combination of *so* plus *as* in an *as*-parenthetical can be excluded. Since the complementizer contains an essential meaning component in this case, it cannot be deleted, but the pronoun can.

    The Doubly Filled Comp Filter is not universal, and it can be argued that it is not active in Dutch, considering topicalization plus V2 in main clauses, or the optional presence of complementizers in embedded questions (in many regional variants of Dutch); see (59), for instance:

(59)  Piet vroeg  wie   (of) het gedaan had.
      Piet asked  who  if    it    done    had
      'Piet asked who did it.'

Thus, deletion of OP is not necessarily expected. A further question is why it cannot be deleted. We suggest that this has to do with morphological incorporation with the complementizer. In the end, this is an arbitrary lexical choice.

    Finally, the question arises how German *wie*-clauses fit into the picture. It is tempting to postulate an analysis parallel to Dutch, which would require that *wie* is a complementizer in this construction (hence not a question word in SpecCP; *pace* Fortmann 2007). The fact that *so* can precede *wie* could be taken as an argument for that. However, the *wh*-morphology of *wie* seems problematic from this perspective. An interesting alternative view may be that *wie* is analyzed as a relative pronoun, and *so* is the antecedent of an adverbial relative clause. This in turn raises questions about the status of the parenthetical as a whole (which is then a complex adverbial phrase containing a relative clause) and the semantics of the construction. We will leave the matter undecided here for reasons of space and time.

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[23] The combination *so as* does exist in another sense, namely *purpose*. For instance, in (i) the meaning of *so as* is comparable to *in order to*:

    (i)      Wash your hands carefully so as to decrease the risk of getting sick.

Summing up, in this section we have taken the basics of our proposal for comment clauses further, and extended our analysis to capture the Dutch variant of *as*-parentheticals, i.e., parentheticals introduced by *zoals.* We have proposed that *als/as* in *as*-parentheticals is a complementizer. Specifically, Dutch *zoals* is a combination of the complementizer *als* (in C) and the operator *zo*, which has A´-moved to SpecCP. The presence of an overt complementizer directly explains why these parentheticals exhibit the V-final pattern rather than the V2 pattern in other Dutch comment clauses. Comparing to English and German, we attested some cross-linguistic variation, but none of this is inconsistent with the claims we have made. In order to gain more insight in this respect, further comparative and diachronic studies are needed.


## 5.    Conclusion

We investigated the internal syntax of parenthetical comment and reporting clauses in Germanic, with some emphasis on Dutch data, and with a specific excursion to *as*-parentheticals. Our central questions concerned the variable position of the finite verb, the various types of predicates that are involved, and the status of the element *zo/so*.

We argued in favor of a generalized analysis that involves a clause-initial operator inside the parenthetical. The operator can be either null due to topic drop or spelled out as *so/zo*. This straightforwardly explains the obligatory subject-verb inversion in Dutch and other V2 languages, as well as the apparent V1 pattern if *zo/so* is dropped. The idea is corroborated by the fact that adverbs and other elements can be part of the parenthetical, but they cannot be preposed: *OP/zo* occupies the first sentence position (SpecCP). More specifically, the operator is A´-moved into this position, and base-generated within the verb phrase either as the complement of the parenthetical verb or as a low adverb adjoined to the verb phrase. The analysis is further supported by the fact that movement of *OP/zo* is unbounded and island-sensitive. In regular cases, *OP/zo* is anaphoric to the host clause, the embedded verb is obligatorily transitive, and there is an object gap. Nevertheless, there are also cases where no internal argument position is available for the anaphoric *pro*-form, especially in reporting parentheticals. These can involve intransitive parenthetical verbs, such as the unaccusative *ontploffen* 'explode', or transitive constructions with an otherwise satiated internal argument. Crucially, *zo* shifts to a manner interpretation in those cases, which requires reanalysis of *OP/zo* as an anaphoric manner adverbial. We also speculated how this might be generalized to all parentheticals under discussion.

Concerning *as/wie/zoals*-parentheticals, which are a particular kind of comment clauses, we showed that these are consistently verb-final in German and Dutch. This word order is different from regular parenthetical comment and reporting clauses. We take the Dutch complex form *zo-als* (lit. 'so' + 'as/if/like') to provide an important clue in explaining this fact. We argued that *-als* is a complementizer here. The presence of a complementizer in the C position automatically induces the V-final pattern. Furthermore, the interpretation of these parentheticals involves a comparison of the contents of the host sentence with the understood embedded proposition. In our analysis, the latter is expressed by the anaphoric operator *zo*, which is A´-moved as in the other parenthetical constructions, and then morphologically combined with the complementizer. We showed that the movement of *zo* in Dutch *zoals*-parentheticals is similarly unbounded and sensitive to islands. Generalizing the approach, we suggested that English *as* is a complementizer, too (hence not a preposition), and we speculated about the status of German *wie*. In this context, we observed some interesting variation between English, German and Dutch: *zo* is obligatory in Dutch *zoals*-parentheticals, *so* is optional in German *(so)-wie*-parentheticals, but *so* has become impossible in present-day English *as*-parentheticals.

In conclusion, the word order puzzle we started out with can be solved unproblematically. We advanced a generalized syntactic analysis of various types of parenthetical comment and reporting clauses, making use of mechanisms that are independently available in the grammar, and thus reducing the need to stipulate construction-specific rules and constraints.

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