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Adverbial clauses and verb second
Thirty-five years of adverbial clauses

(1) The typology of adverbial clauses

The presentation will start from the observation that three kinds of adverbial clauses seem to have to be distinguished, exemplified by the three *while* clauses in (i): in (ia), the *while* clause is a **temporal** modifier of the event (i.e. the announcement of the resignation) expressed in the host clause; in (ib) the **concessive** *while* clause provides **background assumption** for the **proposition** encoded in the host clause; in (ic), the *while* clause is a temporal modifier of **speech act** itself, providing a motivation for the utterance ‘her proposals are very innovative’.

- (i) a. While we were talking about Theresa May, the BBC announced her resignation.
b. While the Prime Minister may be a conservative, her proposals are very innovative.
c. While we are talking about Theresa May, her proposals are very innovative.

Many languages display the same sort of multivalent conjunctions (e.g. Dutch *terwijl*, French *tandis que*), so the phenomenon is of a comparative interest.

The presentation will investigate the syntactic properties of these clauses focussing on the extent to which these three types of clauses can/must be given different syntactic representations in terms of the formal relation with the associated clause.

Evidence will be provided from English as well as from the Germanic languages, illustrated on the basis of Dutch and Flemish, in particular the behaviour of adverbial clauses in the Germanic ‘Verb Second’ pattern.

(2) The typology and interpretation of adverbial clauses and Verb Second transgressions

The typology of adverbial clauses in relation to the Verb Second pattern is pursued focussing on a set of unusual so called ‘Verb Third’ patterns which are considered unacceptable by speakers of standard Dutch but which have been reported as fully acceptable for speakers of the West Flemish dialect.

The relevant pattern is illustrated in (ii). While all varieties of Dutch have (iia), in which the adverbial clause *als hij niet slaagt* (‘if he does not succeed’) is immediately followed by the finite verb *kan* (‘can’), only West Flemish speakers (hence %) accept (iib) in which the adverbial clause is followed by the subject *Jan*, which is then followed by the finite verb. Such patterns as in (iib) are referred to in the literature as ‘V2 transgressions’ and have been the focus of much research.

- (ii) a. Als hij niet slaagt kan Jan herkansen.
if he not succeeds kan Jan resit
b. % Als hij niet slaagt, Jan kan herkansen.
if he not succeeds, Jan can resit

The micro-variation displayed by (iib) will be explored from a comparative perspective. Data such as this show the importance of detailed study of language variation for a better understanding of the language faculty. The work is grounded on native speaker intuitions as well as on the philological and dialectology tradition that has long been the hall mark of the Dutch Department at Ghent University.

(3) Adverbial *die* resumption in the Ghent variety

The nature of **micro-variation** in word order variation among Dutch and Flemish dialects will be further explored focussing on the patterns in (iii):

(iii)	a.	%Volgende vrijdag	die	komt	ze	terug.	Ghent/*StD
		next Friday	<i>die</i>	comes	she	back	
	b.	Volgende vrijdag	dan	komt	ze	terug.	Ghent/StD
		next Friday	<i>dan</i>	comes	she	back	
	c.	Volgende vrijdag		komt	ze	terug.	Ghent/StD
		next Friday		comes	she	back	

(iiia) is unique to the Ghent dialect of Dutch: the verb *komt* is preceded by a temporal modifier *volgende vrijdag* ('next Friday') and what looks like a **resumptive demonstrative pronoun *die***. In all other varieties of Dutch (iiia) is impossible.

(iiib) is generally accepted throughout all varieties of Dutch: here a temporal modifier *volgende week* is followed by a **resumptive** temporal adverb *dan* ('then').

(iiic) is a **regular V2 clause** and is also acceptable throughout the linguistic area: the finite verb is preceded just by the temporal modifier.

At first sight, one might consider (iiia) as a dialect-specific alternative to (iiib). This is the position taken in Zwart (1997), who assimilates (iiia) to (iiib). It will be shown, however, that the superficial similarity between (iiia) and (iiib) is deceiving and that rather than being most like (iiib), (iiia) should be seen as a variant realisation of (iiic). The implications of this finding for the formal syntax of word order in Dutch, in particular for the derivation of 'verb second' word order patterns will be explored.