

Complementiser agreement in Limburg: grammatical, social, and geographical factors of variation

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The Limburgian dialects are among the West Germanic languages with ‘complementiser agreement’ (CA): when the subject of an embedded clause is second person singular, a morpheme reflecting the features of the subject attaches to the complementiser (1).

- (1) Ich dink dat-**s** tich de westrijd geis winne.
I think that-2SG you the game go.2SG win
‘I think that you are going to win the game.’

When an element intervenes between the complementiser and the subject, varieties differ as to what happens to CA: CA can be unaffected (2a); it can shift to a position directly preceding the subject (2b); or it can disappear entirely (2c).

- (2) a. dat-**s** auch dich (Van Koppen 2005)
b. dat auch **s**-tich (Van Alem 2023, to appear)
c. dat auch dich (Van Alem 2023)
‘... that also you’

However, very little is known about the geographical distribution or the underlying causes of this variation. This talk will present the results of a large-scale experiment investigating the role of grammatical, social, and geographical factors on intervention effects on CA. We conducted a grammaticality judgement task as well as a translation task, investigating the effect of different types of interveners: focus particles, adverbs, or a combination of those. We also collected data on language attitudes and the background of the speakers. In the analysis of the geographical data, we will focus on the role of the national border between Dutch and Flemish Limburg, and the natural border created by the river Meuse (Maas).

References

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