COMPLEMENT INSUBORDINATION IN GERMANIC

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INTRODUCTION

Insubordination
= “the conventionalized main clause use of what, on prima facie grounds, appear to be formally subordinate clauses” (Evans 2007: 367)

(1) If you could open the window? (English, IC)

(2) That it should have come to this! (English, Huddleston & Pullum 2002: 944)

This presentation
Focus on one type of insubordination, i.e. complement insubordination, in five related languages, i.e. Dutch, German, English, Swedish and Danish
Research questions / structure of the presentation

- Overview of independent complement clauses in the Germanic languages:
  - Three basic semantic categories (semantic parameters based on Verstraete, D’Hertefelt & Van linden 2012)
    - Deontic
    - Evaluative
    - Elaborative
  - Constructional characteristics
  - All instances of insubordination?

- Cross-linguistic differences

- Conclusions
Independent complement constructions

- Introduced by Dutch *dat*, German *dass*, English *that*, Swedish *att*, Danish *at*
- In most languages also word-order difference (vis-à-vis main clause):
  - Dutch and German: verb-final (instead of V2)
  - Swedish and Danish: sentence adverb before finite verb (instead of after verb)

Three categories

- Deontic ('uncontrolled' / 'controlled')
- Evaluative ('unexpected' / 'expected and negative')
- Elaborative

Data

- Spoken language corpora (see references) and Internet corpus (IC)
DEONTIC INDEPENDENT COMPLEMENT CONSTRUCTIONS: UNCONTROLLED (‘OPTATIVE’)

Meaning
Desirability of a potential state of affairs (SoA), speaker has no control over its realization

Long-range wishes:
(3) My greatest regret, is that I die now, and never again shall I see Eowyn, my fair daughter of Rohan. Oh, that I could see her smile, one last time, my beloved. (English, IC)

Short-range wishes:
(4) Dat het maar rap vrijdag is!
COMPL it PART soon Friday is.PRES (Dutch, IC)

I hope Friday will come soon!
**Deontic Independent Complement Constructions: Uncontrolled ('optative') (2)**

**Cross-linguistic overview**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Meaning</th>
<th>Dutch</th>
<th>German</th>
<th>English</th>
<th>Danish</th>
<th>Swedish</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Long-range</strong></td>
<td>+ (modals)</td>
<td>+ <em>(auf dass, subjunctive)</em></td>
<td>archaic</td>
<td>obsolete</td>
<td>obsolete</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Short-range</strong></td>
<td>+ <em>(maar)</em></td>
<td>+ <em>(nur, bloss)</em></td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Deontic independent complement constructions: Controlled

Meaning
Desirability of a potential SoA, speaker (potentially) has control over its realization

(5) Das [sic] du dich ja warmhältst!
    COMPL you REFL PART warm hold.PRES
    (German, IC)

    You should keep yourself warm!

(6) Dat hij misschien eens een Linux-CD koopt.
    COMPL he maybe PART a Linux-cd buy.PRES
    (Dutch, IC)

    He should maybe buy a Linux-cd.
**Cross-linguistic overview**

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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Strong</strong></td>
<td>+ (Prohibition)</td>
<td>+ (Prohibition and direct order)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Formal marking e.g. double complementation, <em>maar</em></td>
<td>Formal marking: <em>mir, nur, ja</em></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Weak</strong></td>
<td>+</td>
<td>-</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
EVALUATIVE INDEPENDENT COMPLEMENT CONSTRUCTIONS: ‘UNEXPECTED’ EVALUATION

Meaning
Speaker evaluates SoA as unexpected, and evaluation can be either positive or negative.

(7) That it should have come to this!
(English, Huddleston & Pullum 2002: 944)

(8) At noget så katastrofalt kan ende så godt..
end-INF so so catastrophic can.PRES so well
[I can’t believe] that something so catastrophic can end so well!

(Danish, IC)
EVALUATIVE INDEPENDENT COMPLEMENT CONSTRUCTIONS: ‘EXPECTED AND NEGATIVE’ EVALUATION

Meaning
Speaker evaluates SoA as expected and negative

(9) Dass du auch immer so direkt
    COMPL you also always so direct
    (German, IC)

Why do you always have to be so direct?

(10) Att han aldrig kan fatta!
    COMPL he never can.PRES understand.INF
    (Swedish, Petersson 2009: 107)

Why can’t he ever understand!
## EVALUATIVE INDEPENDENT COMPLEMENT CONSTRUCTIONS

### Cross-linguistic overview

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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Unexpected</td>
<td>Scalar / focus marking</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+ (with <em>should</em>)</td>
<td></td>
<td>+</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>+ (preceding <em>tænk</em> frequent)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expected</td>
<td>Necessity / inability marking</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
<td>+</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>+ (preceding <em>tænk</em> obligatory)</td>
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</table>
ELABORATIVE INDEPENDENT COMPLEMENT CONSTRUCTIONS

Meaning
Speaker expands on something that s/he or the addressee have said before

(11) - Hebt ge zelf al eens zo’n scan gehad?
- Nee.
- Dat ge in zo’n machine gaat.

(Dutch, CGN)

- Have you ever had a scan yourself?
- No.
- When you go inside some sort of machine.
ELABORATIVE INDEPENDENT COMPLEMENT CONSTRUCTIONS (2)

  “does not introduce a new element into the picture but rather provides a further characterization of one that is already there, restating it, clarifying it, refining it, or adding a descriptive attribute or comment."

- Always strong pragmatic dependency on previous discourse (cf. Lindström & Londen 2008: 128)

→ To what extent can these be considered ‘main clauses’ in their own right?
→ No instances of insubordination (↔ Evans 2007)
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Elaborative</td>
<td>Descriptive / demonstrative particles</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
# Conclusions

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Deontic</strong></td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Uncontrolled</td>
<td>Modals of potentiality; particles</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>archaic</td>
<td>obsolete</td>
<td>obsolete</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Controlled</td>
<td>Particles</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Evaluative</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unexpected</td>
<td>Scalar elements (explicit or implicit)</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>archaic</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expected and negative</td>
<td>Combinations of adverbs ‘always, never’ and modal verbs ‘must’, ‘can’</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+      (with <em>tænk</em>)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Elaborations</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Descriptive / demonstrative particles like <em>so, like this</em></td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CONCLUSIONS (2)

Differences in functional range:
- Broadest range attested in Dutch and German
- More restricted range in Swedish and German
  - Further factor of interest: in Danish apparently higher need for semi-embedding element in some contexts (cf. tænk in evaluatives)
- Most restricted range in English

Possible factors in divergence:
- Diachronic developments (some meanings can be lost over time, cf. obsolete optatives in Swedish and Danish, ‘archaic’ optatives and evaluatives in English)
- Different degrees of ‘integration’ of subordinate clause in main clause complex (cf. König & van der Auwera 1988)

BUT in general: more research needed!
CONCLUSIONS (3)

Complement insubordination in Germanic from a typological perspective:
Semantics of our three categories: clearly interpersonal (cf. Evans 2007)
- Attitudes of the speaker (evaluative, uncontrolled deontic)
- Speaker-addressee negotiation (controlled deontic)
- Organization of information in interaction (elaborative)
BUT: importance of the parameter of pragmatic independence to delineate concept of insubordination!
CONCLUSIONS (4)

**Schematic generalization: unity within complement insubordination?**

- At first sight: one ‘schema’ for all constructions, with different categories distinguished on the basis of formal parameters (e.g. ‘unexpected’ evaluatives with scalar markers)
- BUT: several problems with this approach (cf. Verstraete, D’Hertefelt & Van Linden 2012): different main clause origins, different degrees of conventionalization and independence...

→ No schematic generalization possible

**Further research:**

- Insubordination = still largely underdescribed

→ Extend study to other (Germanic) languages, to come to a better understanding of this phenomenon and help define its boundaries
THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION!
### Abbreviations

- **COMPL**  complementizer
- **INF**  infinitive
- **NEG**  negation
- **PART**  particle
- **PL**  plural
- **PRES**  present
- **REFL**  reflexive
REFERENCES

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Cited literature
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Further literature


REFERENCES (5)


REFERENCES (6)
