

# The grammaticalisation of the *gaan* + infinitive future in spoken Dutch and Flemish.

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# 'Go' as a future tense expression (FTE)

Only lexical/  
not FTE

FTE restricted

FTE unrestricted



**German**

**Dutch**

**English**

*\*Ich gehe in die  
Stadt gehen*

*Wat gaat hij  
zeggen?*

*I'm going to go  
into town*

*?Ik ga naar de  
stad gaan*

# Grammaticalisation

[I am going] [to marry Bill]

*Lexical go = I am going somewhere in order to marry B*

Originally animate subject, proximate future reference

*To* indicates a purpose/goal (= intentional meaning)

[I am going to marry Bill]      [going to] = unit

*Grammatical go = FTE competing with will*

Hopper and Traugott (2003)

# Grammaticalisation – semantic bleaching

- Inanimate subjects:

*The tree is **going to** lose its leaves*

- Motion verbs *come* and *go*:

*I'm **going to** go into town tomorrow*

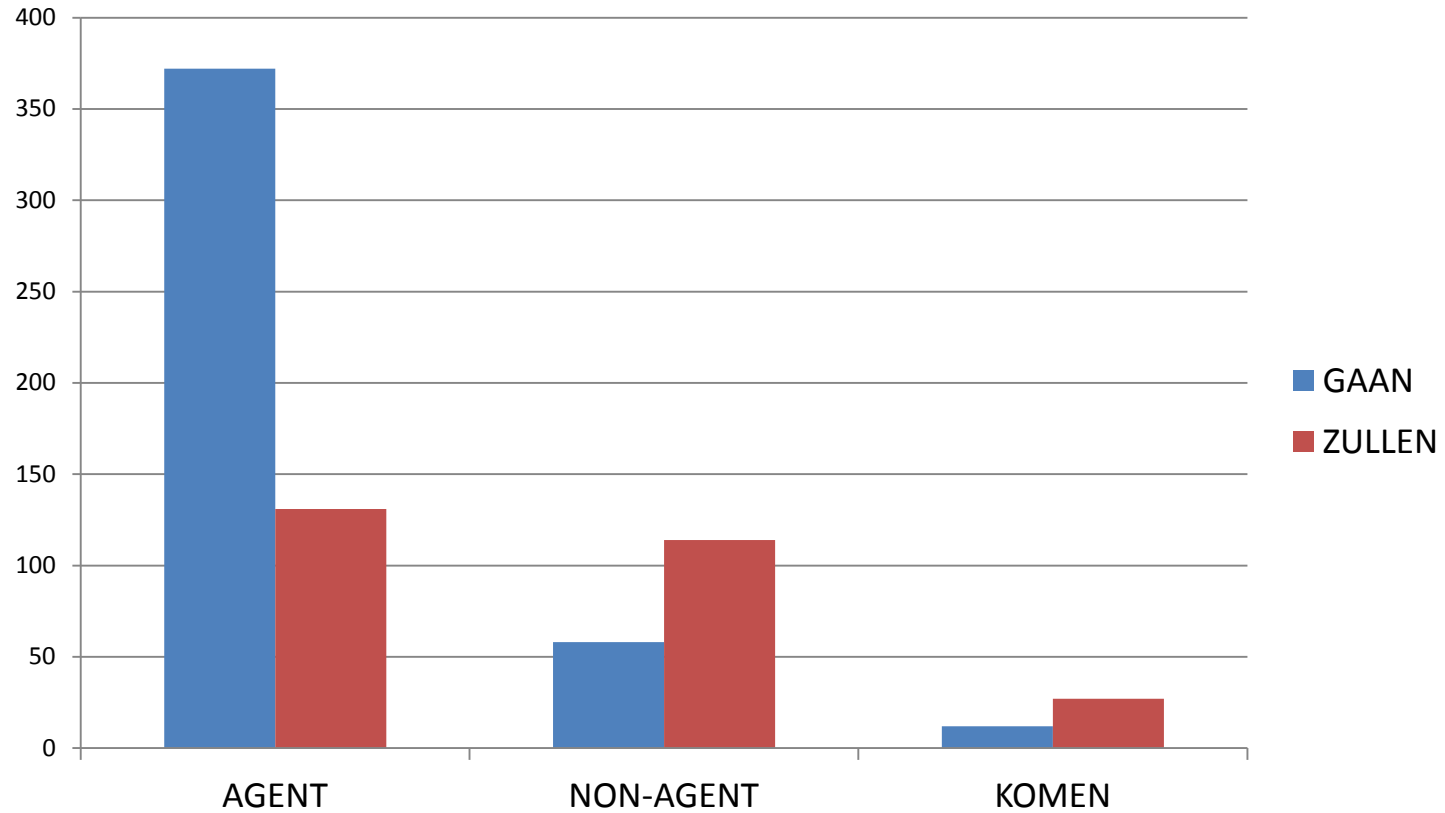
Grammatically acceptable. But is this reflected in actual usage?

**How far down the grammaticalisation path is the *gaan*-future in Dutch?**

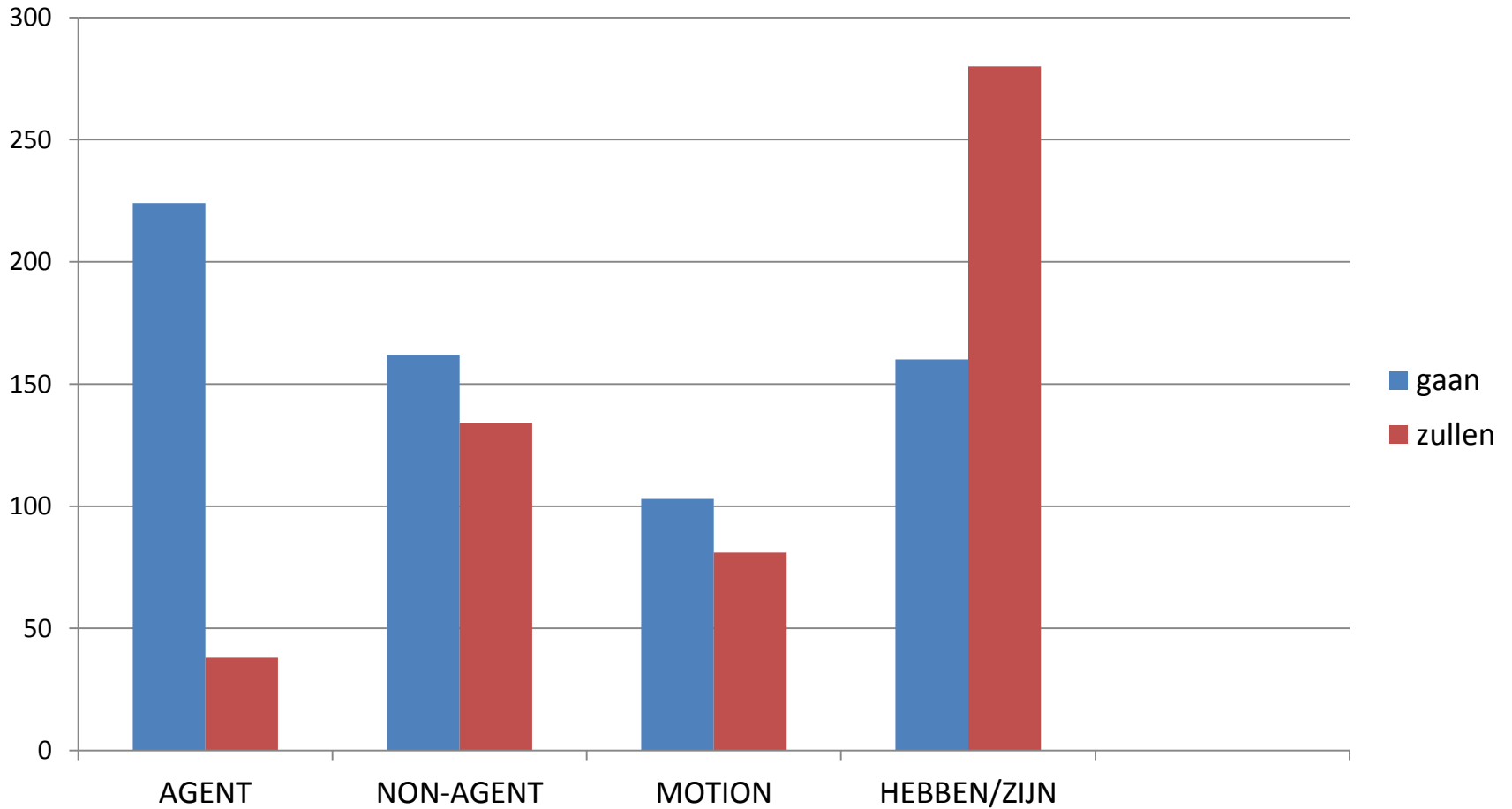
# Frequency of *gaan* as an FTE in NL and VL

- Examine the relative proportions of the two syntactic FTEs *gaan* versus *zullen* in contexts where the two can potentially vary.
- Lexical restrictions on *gaan*. Examine FTEs in separate groups determined by observed behaviour:
  - Agent verbs: *doen, zoeken, bellen*
  - Non-agent verbs: *worden, krijgen, zien, gebeuren*
  - Motion verbs: *komen, gaan*
  - *hebben, zijn*
- Total FTEs in sub-corpus = 1105

# *Gaan versus zullen* in NL



# *Gaan versus zullen in VL*



# Syntactic constraints on *gaan* as FTE

Following quantitative variationist method of Poplack & Tagliamonte (2000), Torres-Cacoullos & Walker (2009), Tagliamonte (2013).

- Clause type (main versus subordinate)
- Grammatical person (1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>)
- Subject type (animate vs non-animate)
- Proximity of future reference (proximate  $\leq$  6 mths)
- Negation
- Interrogatives
- Co-occurrence with temporal adverb

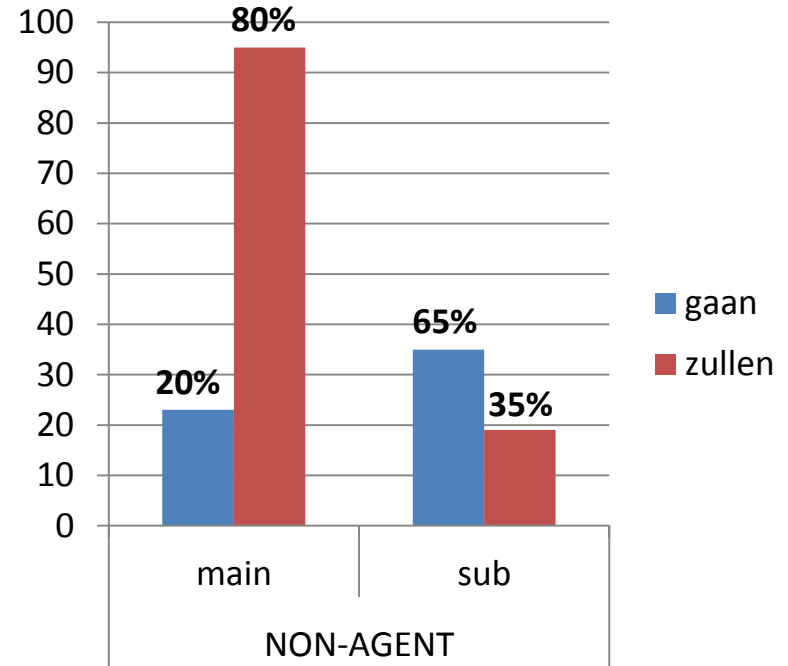
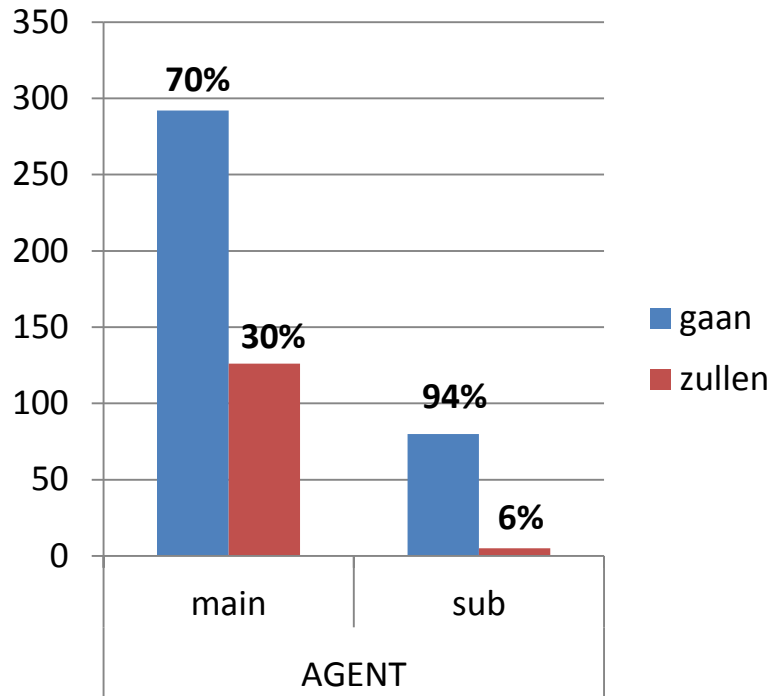
And in addition, co-occurrence with particles

Red = significant in all groups in NL and VL ( $p < 0.05$ )

Blue = significant in only some groups



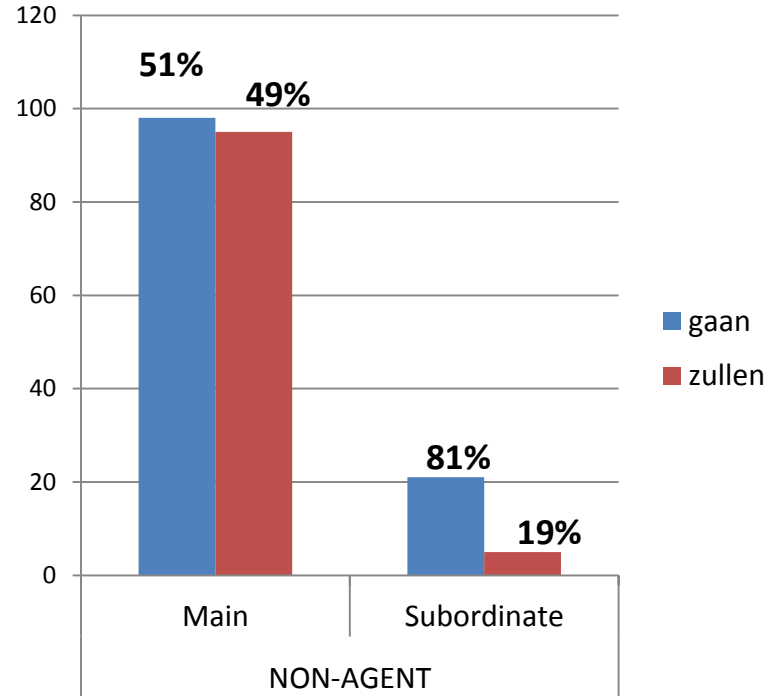
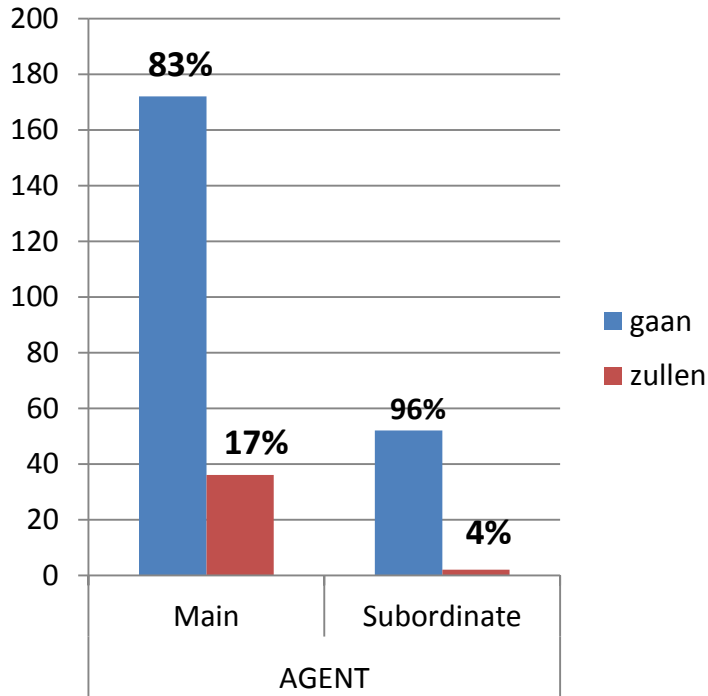
# Main vs. subordinate clauses NL



Agent:  $\chi^2(1)=20.34, p<0.001$

Non-agent:  $\chi^2(1)=32.05, p<0.001$

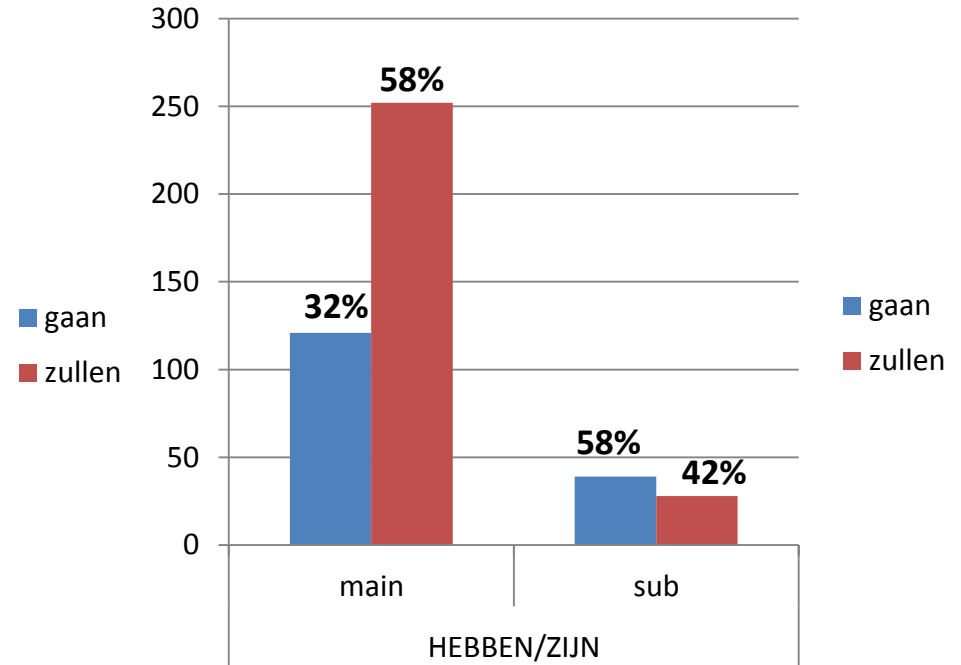
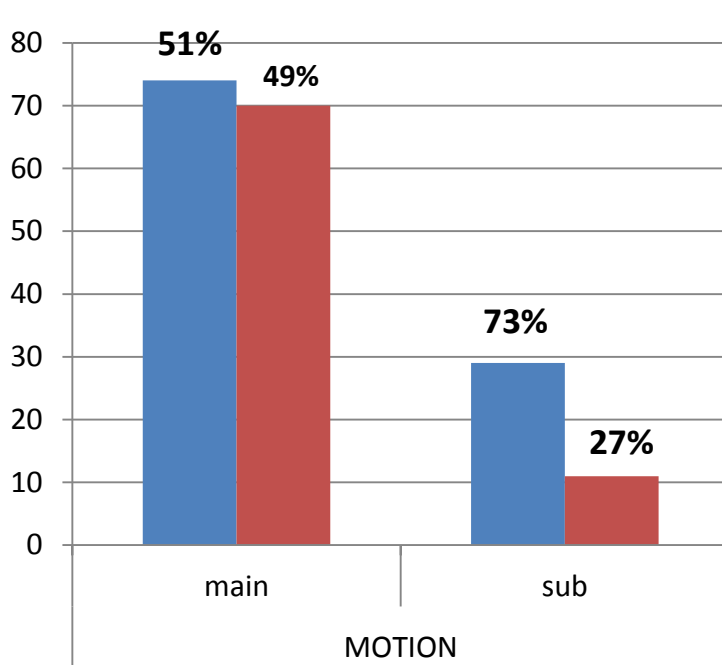
# Main vs. subordinate clauses VL



Agent:  $\chi^2(1)=5.35$ ,  $p=0.021$

Non-Agent:  $\chi^2(1)=7.14$ ,  $p=0.008$

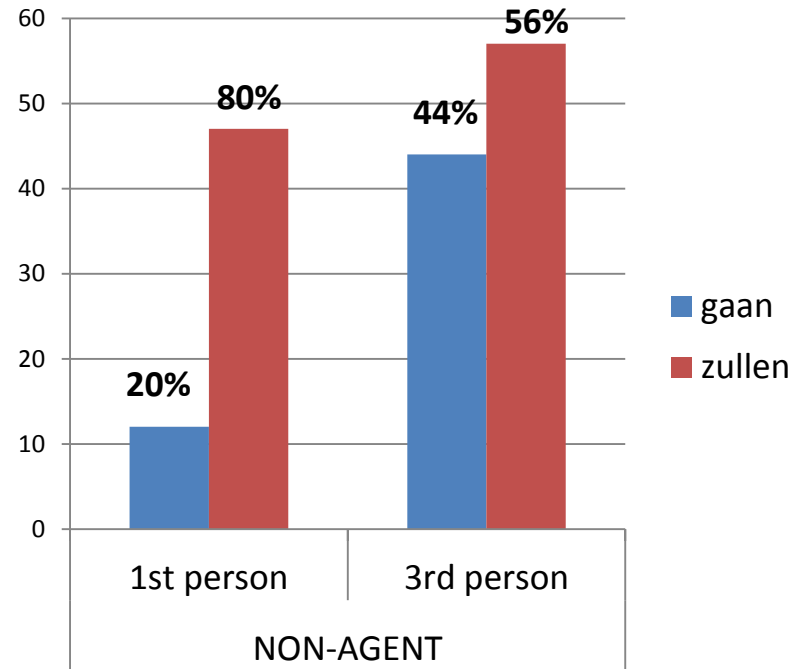
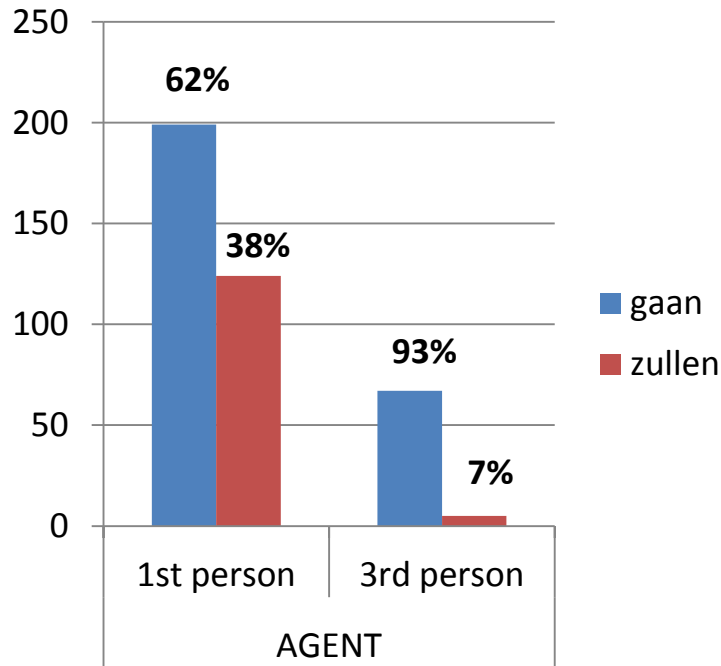
# Main vs. subordinate clauses VL



Motion:  $\chi^2(1)=4.84$ ,  $p = 0.028$

Hebben/zijn:  $\chi^2(1)=15.20$ ,  $p < 0.001$

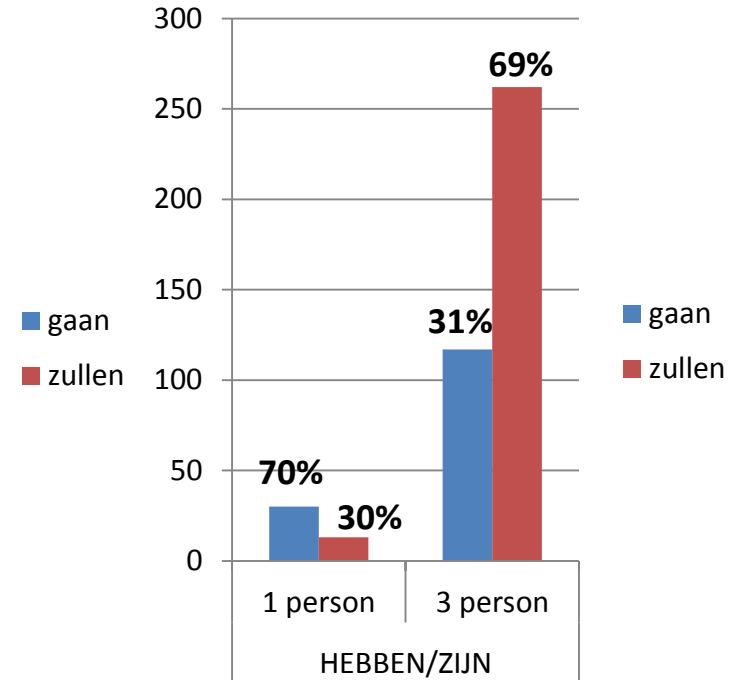
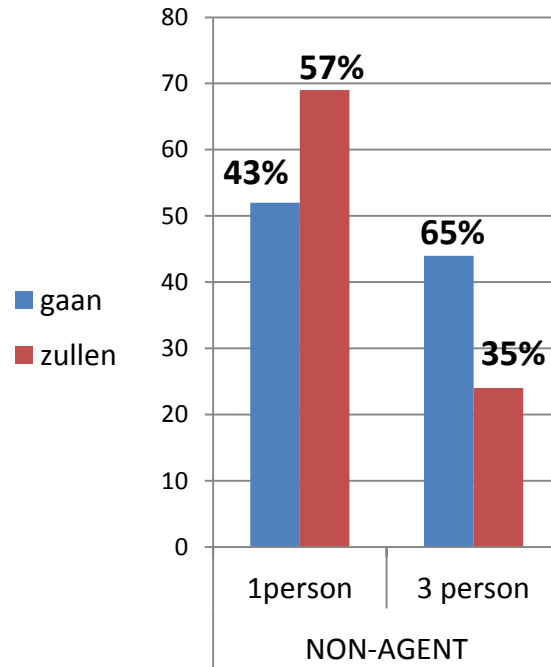
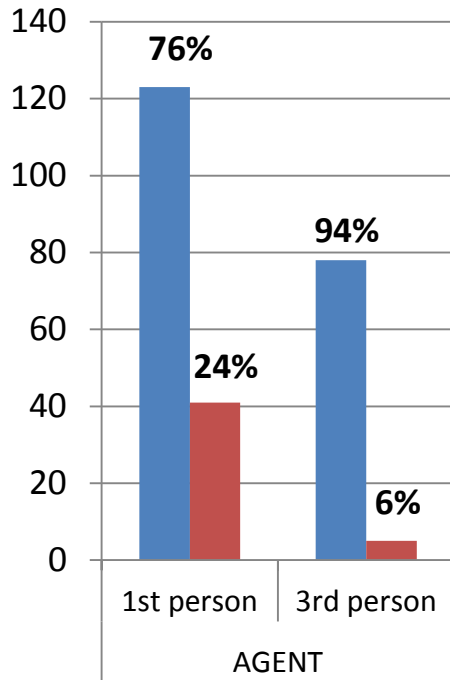
# Grammatical person in NL



Agent:  $\chi^2(1)=25.06$ ,  $p<0.001$

Non-agent:  $\chi^2(1)=8.04$ ,  $p=0.005$

# Grammatical person in VL

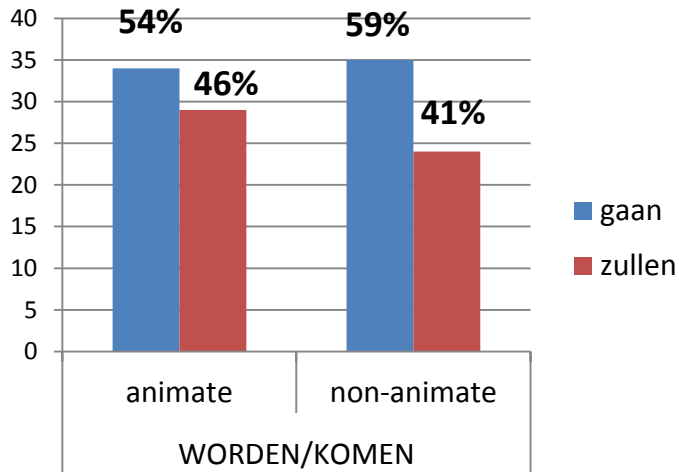


Agent:  $\chi^2(1)=9.65$ ,  $p=0.002$   
 (Motion:  $\chi^2(1)=3.36$ ,  $p=0.067$ )

Non-agent:  $\chi^2(1)=7.38$ ,  $p=0.007$   
*Hebben/zijn*:  $\chi^2(1)=24.05$ ,  $p<0.001$

Persistence?  
 Hopper (1991)

# Animacy of subject

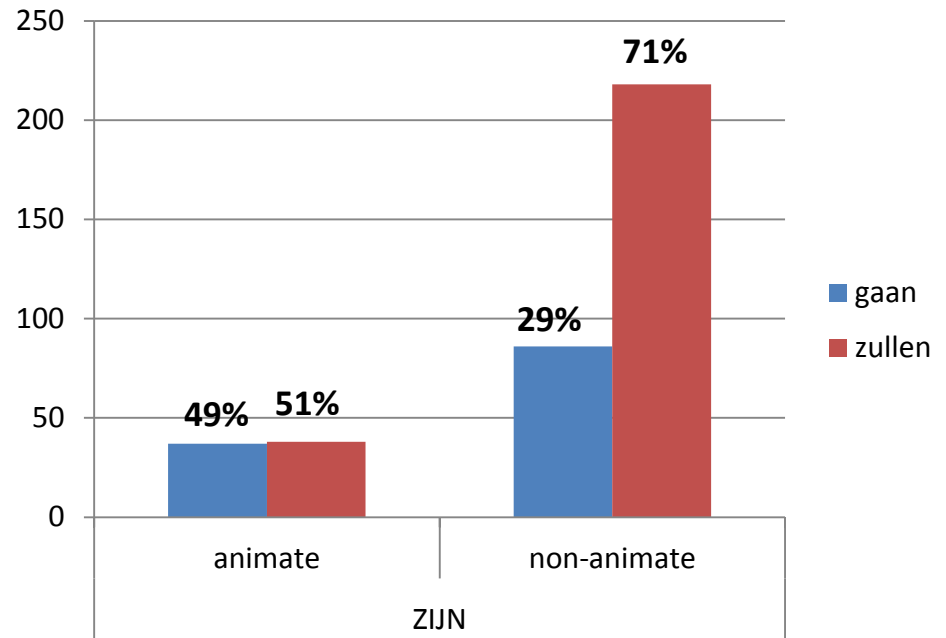


$\chi^2(1) = 0.17, p = 0.679$  (VL)

Also non significant:

*Worden/komen* (NL):  $\chi^2(1) = 0.15, p = 0.694$

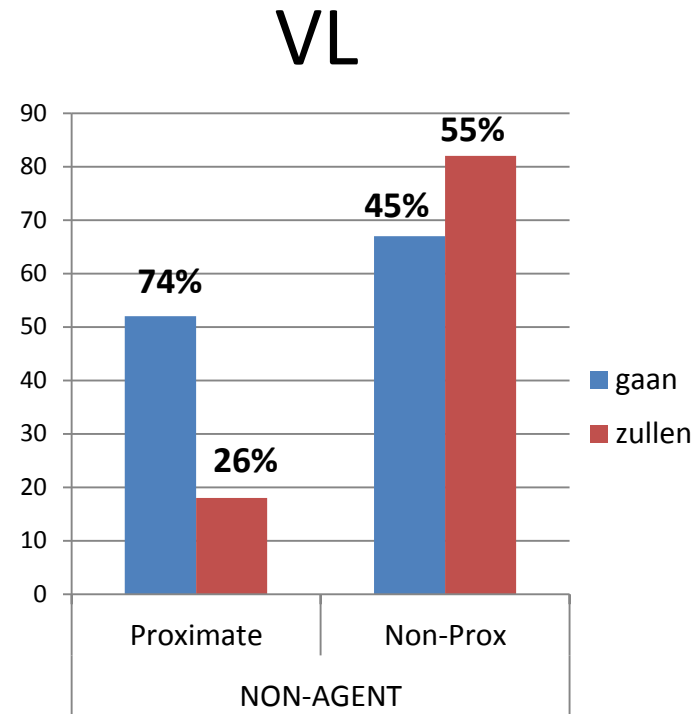
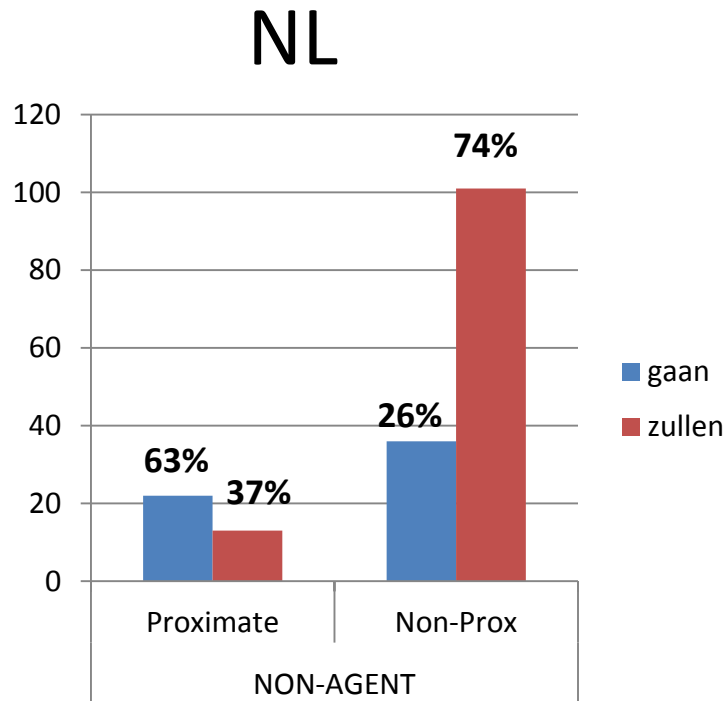
*Gaan* (VL):  $\chi^2(1) = 2.62, p = 0.105$



$\chi^2(1) = 10.83, p = 0.001$

Persistence?

# Proximity of future reference only with non-agent verbs



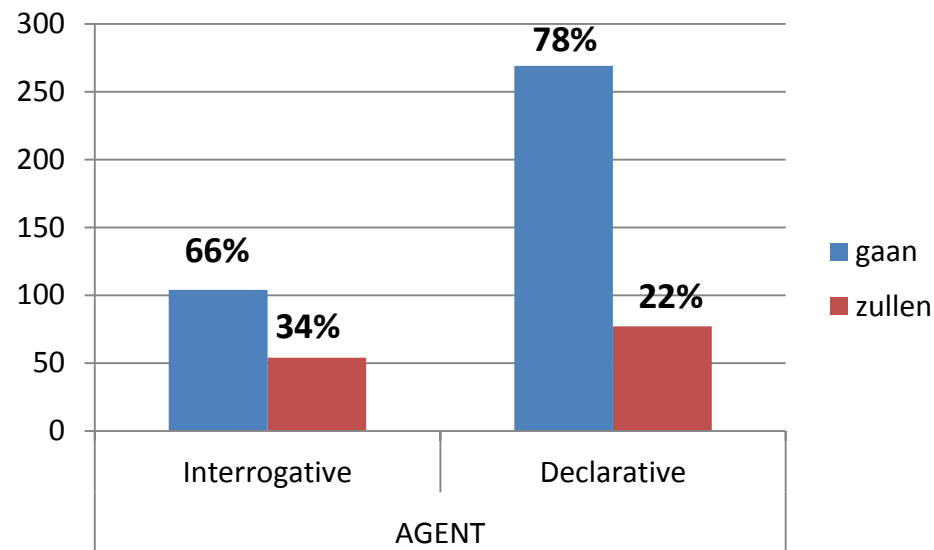
NL:  $\chi^2(1)=15.09$ ,  $p<0.001$

VL:  $\chi^2(1)=15.34$ ,  $p<0.001$

Persistence?  
Why not  
*hebben/zijn?*

# *Gaan* in declarative sentences (a feature of NL?)

Number of interrogatives too small to test in all categories other than Agent. Only significant in NL.




$$\chi^2(1)=7.31, p=0.007$$



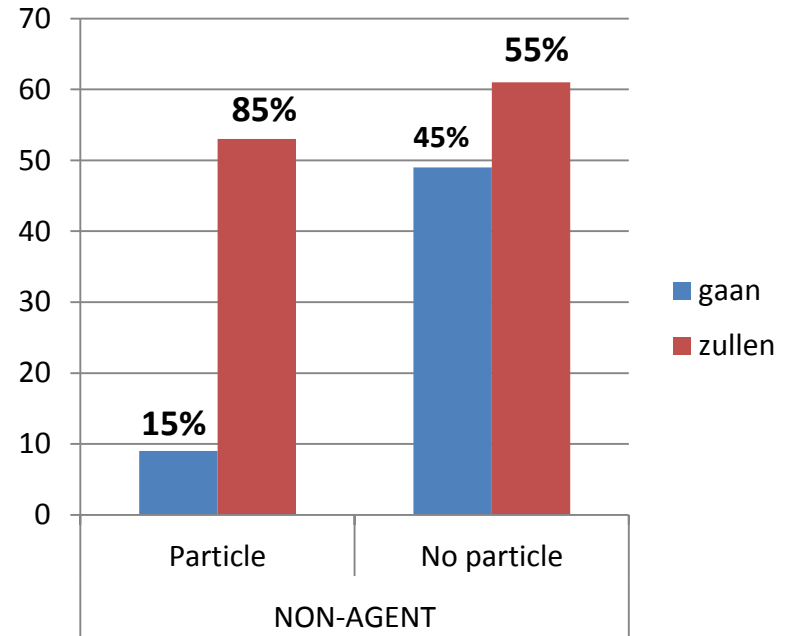
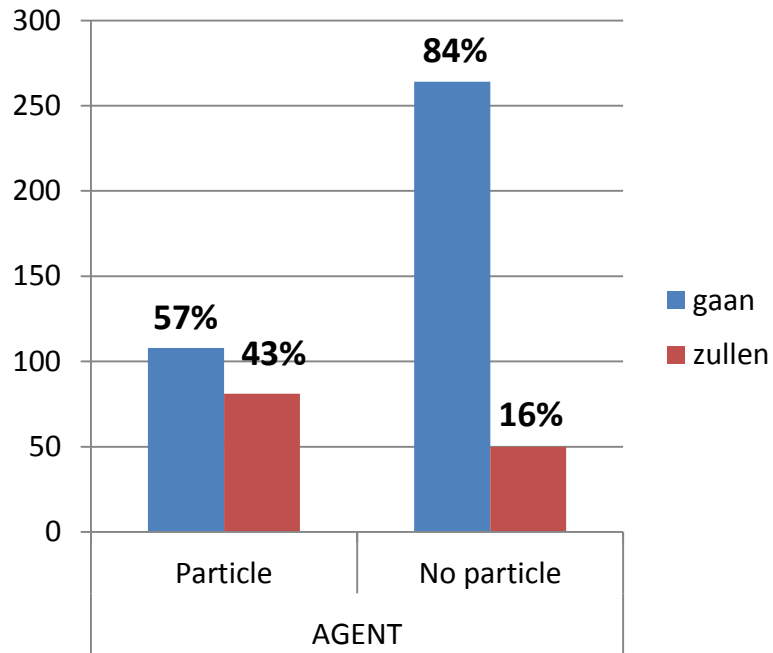
# Particles

Most frequent particles in the sub-corpus:



maar eens  
even dan  
ook wel  
nou toch

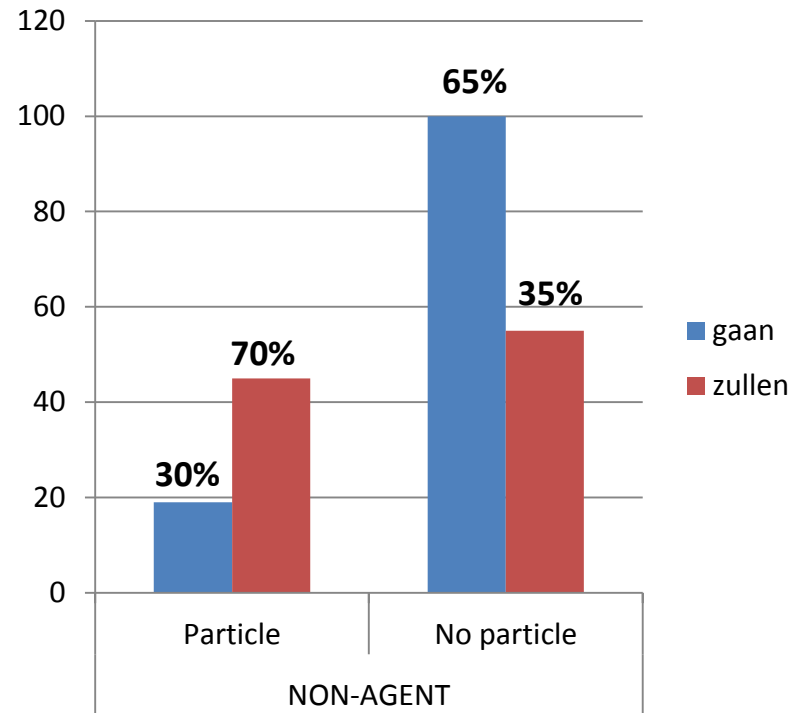
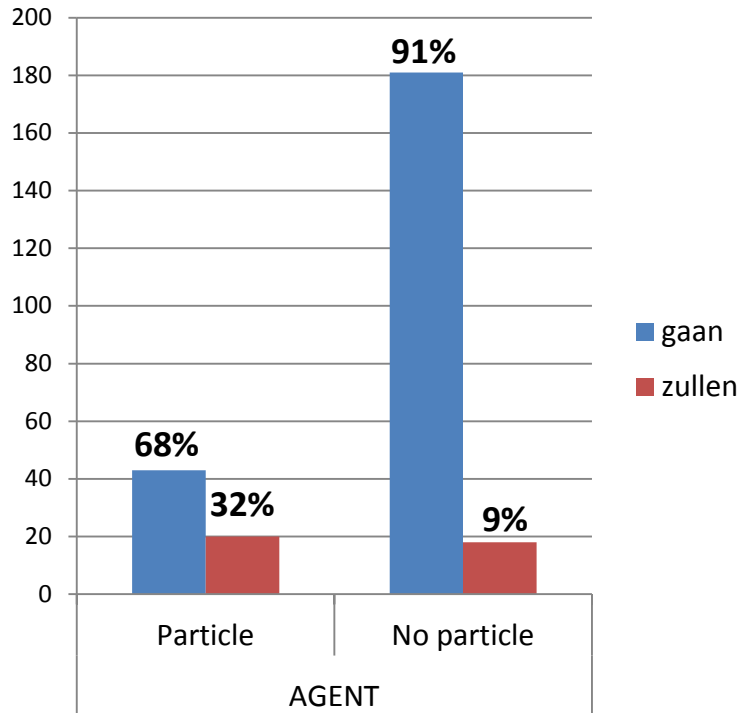
# Particles in NL



Agent:  $\chi^2(1)=14.68, p<0.001$

Non-Agent:  $\chi^2(1)=43.05, p<0.001$

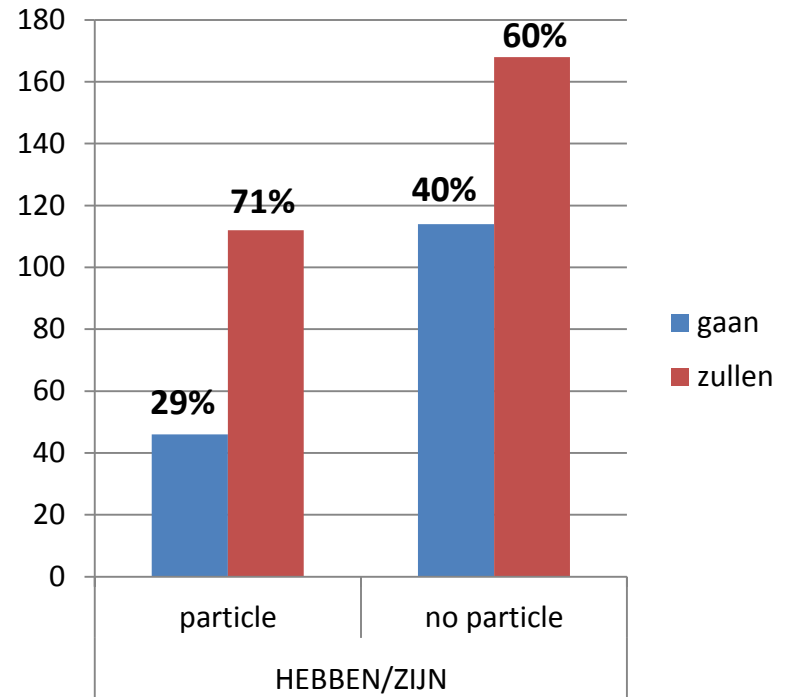
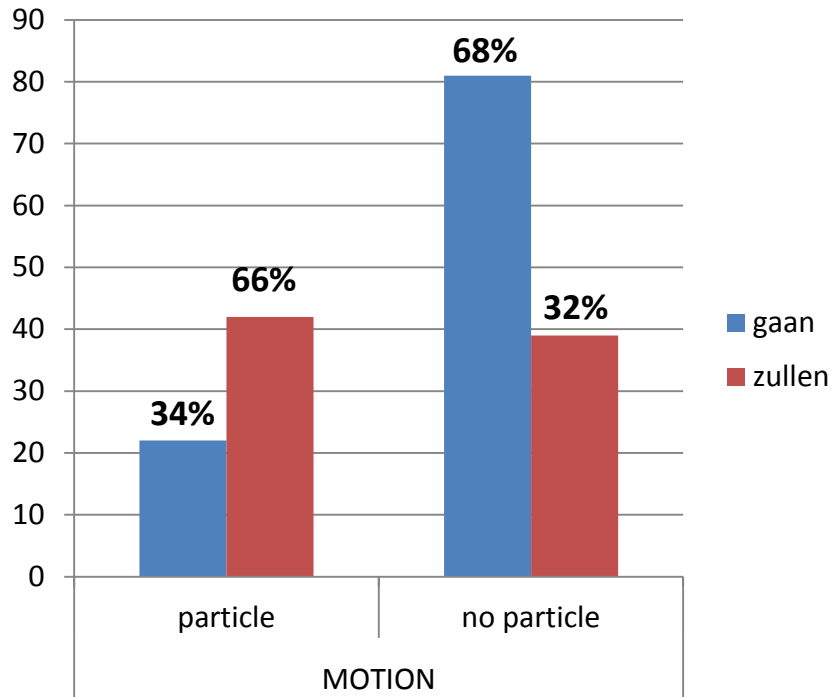
# Particles in VL



Agent:  $\chi^2(1)=18.10$ ,  $p<0.001$

Non-Agent:  $\chi^2(1)=20.76$ ,  $p<0.001$

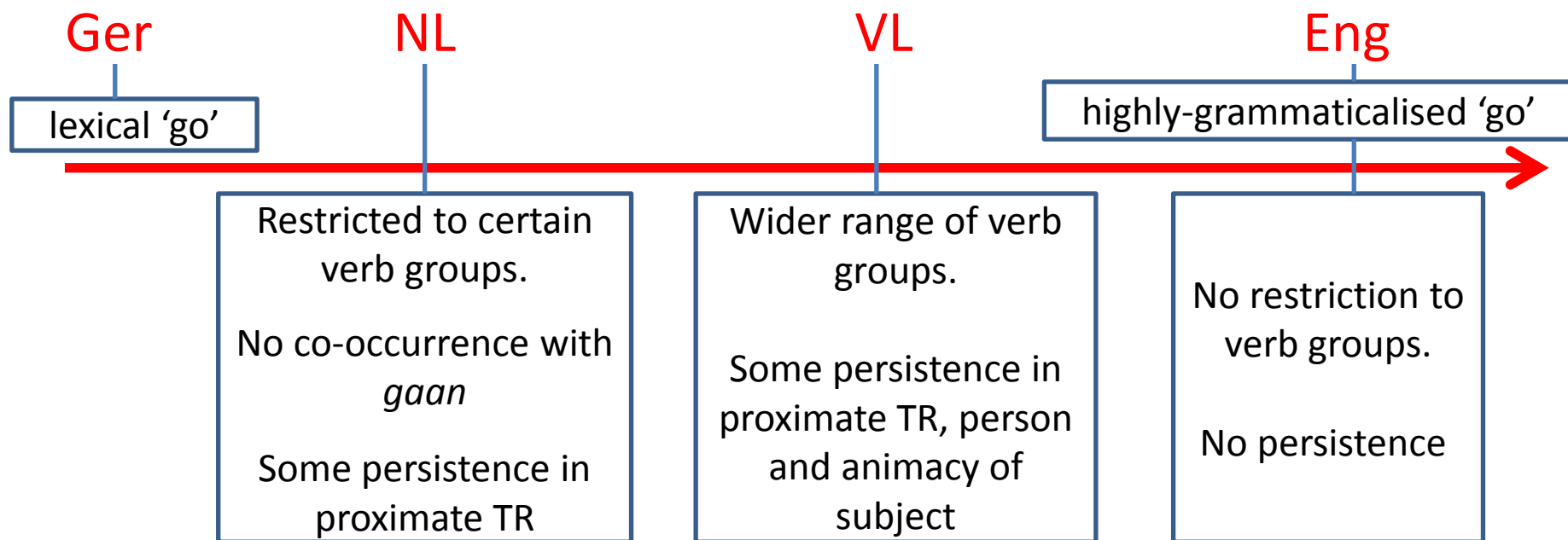
# Particles in VL



Motion:  $\chi^2(1)=17.27$ ,  $p<0.001$

Hebben/zijn:  $\chi^2(1)=5.12$ ,  $p=0.024$

# Grammaticalisation path of 'go' FTE



Commonalities E, NL, VL: *gaan/go* in subordinate clauses  
*zullen/will* in first person

Feature of NL and VL: *zullen* co-occurring with particles

# Selected references

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