



*Asynchronicity Meets the Sandwich:  
Dutch V1-Conditionals Between  
German and English?*



Torsten Leuschner

- Ghent University (UGent) -

Torsten.Leuschner@UGent.be

## - Introduction -

- V1-conditionals
  - English: three main subschemas
    - *Should* the Euro fail, Europe will/would fail. - open/tentative
    - *Were* the Euro to fail, Europe would fail. - tenative
    - *Had* the Euro failed, Europe would have failed. - counterfactual
  - cf. polar interrogatives (Jespersen 1940, Pascual 2014)
    - A: Will you come? (B: Yes.) A: Then we can leave at once.
- structure
  - contrastive analysis English/German (Van den Nest 2010)
    - corpus data: BNC, DeReKo, Penn Corpora of Historical English, ...
  - a Germanic Sandwich: the Dutch perspective
    - anecdotal data, literature (Beekhuizen 2014, van der Horst 2008)
  - further issues: diachronic, constructional/semiotic, empirical

## - Contrastive Analysis: English / German -

- V1-conditionals as emergent grammar?
  - German: *Scheitert* der Euro, (dann) scheitert Europa. (A. Merkel)
    - *Scheitert* der Euro? Dann scheitert Europa.
    - *Sind* Sie neugierig auf die Schalmeien-Musik geworden? Dann lohnt sich ein Besuch ... ('Have you become curious about the shawm music? Then ...')
    - *Wäre* der Euro gescheitert, (dann) wäre Europa gescheitert.
  - English: construction-specific constraints
    - specialised for conditionality
      - tentative, counterfactual: *should, were, had*
      - neutral: *Should* the Euro fail, Europe *will* fail.
    - distinct from interrogatives
      - (*\*Fails* the Euro, ... /) *\*Does* the Euro fail, ... / *\*Is* the Euro failing, ...
      - *\*Did* the Euro fail, ... / *\*Has* the Euro failed, ... / *\*Would* the Euro fail, ...
      - *Should* the Euro fail? / *Should*(\*n't) the Euro (not) fail, ...



- from synchrony to diachrony
  - evidence: quantitative/qualitative (Leuschner/Van den Nest 2015)
    - text frequency German:English (written) ca. 10:1
      - but similar distribution: style/register, discourse function
      - (cf. Swedish: Hilpert 2010, Auer/Lindström 2011)
    - productivity (verb types/forms): German V1 proverbs
      - *Gibt* man dem Teufel den kleinen Finger, nimmt er die ganze Hand.
      - *Ist* die Katze aus dem Haus, tanzen die Mäuse auf dem Tisch.
      - *Kommt* Zeit, kommt Rat. / *Hast* du was, bist du was. / ...
    - but also significant increase of *sollte*, *hätte*, *wäre*
  - 'asynchronous' grammaticalization? (~ König 2012)
    - Present-Day German: *Kommst* du heute nicht, kommst du morgen.
    - Middle English: *Come* ye not, it shal coste you your lyf.
    - Present-Day English: *Should* / *Had* / *Were* ...

- historical evidence (Van den Nest 2010)
  - working hypothesis: divergence, specialisation (cf. Hopper 1991)
    - *wirt* her da umme beschuldiget (...), sin arbeit virlusit her da an ('Gets he accused of that, he will lose his work because of it')
      - German: slight, more or less steady increase of both
  - English: relationship with interrogatives?
    - decreasing use of main verbs and present forms
      - *Fulga* nu se mete ðære wambe willan, & sio wamb ðæs metes, ðonne towyrpð God ægðer. ('Follow now the food the will of the belly, ... then ...')
      - *Do* þu hit eanes awei; ne schalt tu neauer nan oðer swuch acourin. ('Get you rid of it once, you will never (re)gain anything like it.')
      - *Deceyueth* me the foxe / so haue I ylle lerned my casus
    - but only 28 tokens in OE, all subjunctive (Penn-Helsinki Corpus)
      - text frequency OHG:OE already ca. 10:1
      - 16 V1-protases in the present, all subjunctive
        - » e.g. *fulga* '(he/she/it) follow' – cf. *gif* : 24%

## - The Dutch Perspective -

- Old Low Franconian, Middle Dutch (van den Horst 2008)
  - *Hebban* olla uogala nestas hagunnan hinase hi(c) (a)nda thu ...
    - Latin: *Habent* omnes uolucres nidos inceptos nisi ego et tu
  - ande *sint* auor thine zene samo ... ('and are however your teeth like ...', *LW*)
  - *newande* her ..., her mohte ... ('believed he not ..., he could ..., *Mittelfr. Reimb.*)
  - *hebdi* kennisse uws selfs, soe seldi altooes nedergaen in onweerden ('have you knowledge of yourself, then you will ..., *Ruusbroec*)
- Old Saxon, Middle Low German
  - *Sagdun* thuo lof gode ('said then praise [to] God', *Heliand*)
  - huand *uuissin* sia that te uaron [...] than uurti im iro muodsebo giblodit an iro brioston ('for knew they that really, then ...', *Heliand*)
  - *Is* he onbesproken man, he sal ... ('Is he [a] well-reputed man, he will ...', 13C)

- delayed clause integration (König/van der Auwera 1988)
  - *Hou je van vlees, (dan) braadt je in Croma.* ('Love you meat, (then) ...')
- position of the V1-protasis
  - desententialization: innovative, progressive?
    - We kunnen beter naar huis gaan, *mocht* het blijven regenen.
    - We kunnen, *mocht* het blijven regenen, beter naar huis gaan.
  - in Dutch: regressive (van de Horst 2008)
    - *Ic ware onteert (...), mesquame u yet.*
      - I would be dishonored, *displeased* it you / *should* it displease you.
    - *Dat waer, ist so men mi seide, een temmerman van goede love.*
      - That was, *is it* as I was told, a carpenter of good reputation.'
  - most frequent and acceptable with *mocht/sollte* and *wil/wollte*
    - *Der Artikel würde zu lang, wollten wir jedes Detail behandeln.* (G. Helbig)

- a Germanic Sandwich?

- lexical variability

- *Faalt* de euro, (dan) faalt Europa.

- emergent: *Faalt* de euro? (Ja.) Dan faalt Europa.

- *Verliezen* ze vocht, dan slinken ze weer.

- *Vinden* we geen uitweg, dan hebben we nog iets achter de hand.

- divergence, specialisation

- *Mocht* (B also *Moest*) hij te laat komen, moet je hem straffen.

- ('Should he arrive late, you'll have to punish him.')

- B, dialectal: *Is 't dat hij te laat komt* 'is it that (~if) he arrives late'

- *Had* ik dat geweten, zou ik haar niet hebben laten vertrekken.

- ('Had I known that, I wouldn't have let her leave.')

- *Waren* we niet zo snel op een werkbaar product uitgekomen, was het [project] wellicht in de lade verdwenen. ([www.food-nutrition.nl](http://www.food-nutrition.nl))

- ('Had we not found a suitable product so quickly, ...' - rare)



- Dutch peculiarities (van der Horst 2008, Beekhuizen 2008)
  - extraposition (Belgian)
    - Ik zou [*hef*]i appreciëren [*mocht* u iets voor mij kunnen doen]i.
      - cf. Ik zou het appreciëren als u iets voor mij zou kunnen doen.
  - disintegrated contrast
    - *Werd* het door velen geschuwd, *wij beschouwen* het als een uitdaging.
      - cf. *Wurde* es von vielen gescheut, (so) *sehen wir* es als Herausforderung.
  - unmarked 'miratives' (~ Beekhuizen)
    - (Het is alsof de duivel ermee speelt.) *Neemt* de Surinaamse overheid iets daadkrachtig ter hand, komt het noodlot om de hoek kijken. (2003)
      - cf.: *Ergreift* die Regierung *endlich* / *schon mal* tatkräftig die Initiative, ...
  - temporal
    - *Werd* ik vanochtend wakker, bleek het toch waar. (2006)
      - 'When I awoke this morning, it turned out to be true after all.'

## - Conclusions -

- a Germanic Sandwich?
  - qualitative: Dutch ~ German
    - emergent grammar, large overlap with interrogatives
    - but also traces of divergence and specialization
  - quantitative?
    - no figures yet, e.g. auxiliary/modal vs. main verbs
    - Sandwich hypothesis: more specialization than in German
- Dutch: progressive grammaticalization
  - protasis:   hypothetical                   >   given                   >   factual  
  |                   |  
  contrastive, 'mirative'   temporal
  - cf. *a/V1*-concessives ('*alhoewel*, *although*, even if/though', mostly factual)
    - *Al hebben* we aan één punt genoeg, we kiezen voor de aanval.
    - North Sea Germanic: also Middle English, Middle Low German

- further issues
  - diachronic: V1 as an emergent marker
    - cf. modern V1-declaratives (Önnerfors 1997)

*Kommt ein Skelett zum Arzt. Sagt der Arzt: "Hätten Sie wohl früher kommen sollen!"* (cf. Dutch; English: ... Says the doctor: ...)
    - episode-initial, 'thetical' (Hopper 1975, Petrova / Solf 2008)
  - constructional/semiotic (Beekhuizen 2014)
    - Dutch: five distinct V1 peer subordinating constructions
      - conditional (3x), mirative, contrastive
    - hence V1: symbolic or iconic?
  - empirical
    - V1 <> 'if'; protasis: verbs, position, integration; register, function, ...
    - colostruational analysis, multi-dimensional scaling (Beekhuizen 2014)



# Thank you!

*Should* there still be questions later:

Torsten.Leuschner@UGent.be

## References

**Beekhuizen**, Barend (2014): "V1-bijzinnen: verbonden in vorm, verdeeld in functie." *Dag van de Nederlandse zinsbouw*, Utrecht, November 28

**Hopper**, Paul J. (1975): *The Syntax of the Simple Sentence in Proto-Germanic*. The Hague: Mouton.

**Hopper**, Paul J. (1991): "On Some Principles of Grammaticalization." In: Traugott, Elizabeth C./Heine, Bernd (eds.), *Approaches to Grammaticalization*. Amsterdam/Phil.: Benjamins, vol. 1, 17-35.

**Jespersen**, Otto (1940): *A Modern English Grammar on Historical Principles. Part V: Syntax. 4th Volume*. Heidelberg: Winter.

**König**, Ekkehard (2012): "Contrastive Linguistics and Language Comparison." In: *Languages in Contrast* 12, 3-26.

**Leuschner**, Torsten / **Van den Nest**, Daan (2015): "Asynchronous Grammaticalization: V1-Conditionals in Present-Day English and German." In: *Languages in Contrast* 15, 34-65.

**Önnerfors**, Olaf (1997): *Verb-Erst-Deklarativsätze. Grammatik und Pragmatik*. Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell.

**Pascual**, Esther (2014): *Fictive Interaction: The Conversation Frame in Thought, Language and Discourse*. Amsterdam: Benjamins.

**Petrova**, Svetlana / **Solf**, Michael (2008): "Rhetorical Relations and Verb Placement in the Early Germanic Languages." In Fabricius-Hansen, Cathrine / Ramm, W. (eds.), *'Subordination' versus 'Coordination' in Sentence and Text: a Crosslinguistic Perspective*. Amsterdam: Benjamins, pp. 329–351.

**Van den Nest**, Daan (2010): *Emergenz und Grammatikalisierung von V1-Konditionalen. Ein Rekonstruktionsversuch am Beispiel des Deutschen und Englischen*. Ph.D. Diss., Ghent University

**van der Horst**, Joop (2008): *Geschiedenis van de Nederlandse syntaxis*. Leuven: Leuven U.P.