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

Carol Fehringer


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Only lexical/ not FTE</th>
<th>FTE restricted</th>
<th>FTE unrestricted</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>German</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><em>Ich gehe in die Stadt gehen</em></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Dutch</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Wat gaat hij zeggen?</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>?Ik ga naar de stad gaan</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>English</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>I’m going to go into town</td>
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</table>
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

![Bar chart showing frequency of Gaan and Zullen in Agent, Non-Agent, and Komen contexts. The chart indicates a significantly higher frequency of Gaan in the Agent context compared to Zullen.](chart.png)
Gaan versus zullen in VL
Syntactic constraints on *gaan* as FTE


- Clause type (main versus subordinate)
- Grammatical person (1\textsuperscript{st}, 2\textsuperscript{nd}, 3\textsuperscript{rd})
- Subject type (animate vs non-animate)
- Proximity of future reference (proximate ≤ 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?
Hoppper (1991)
Animacy of subject

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

Also non significant:

\[ \chi^2(1) = 0.15, \ p= 0.694 \]

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

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

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

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
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
Part icles 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

Ger

NL

Lexical ‘go’

Restricted to certain verb groups.
No co-occurrence with *gaan*
Some persistence in proximate TR

VL

Wider range of verb groups.
Some persistence in proximate TR, person and animacy of subject

Eng

highly-grammaticalised ‘go’

No restriction to verb groups.
No persistence

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


