The word order of complement clauses in Wangerooge Frisian

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Outline

Section 1

What is (Wangerooge) Frisian?

Frisian

- Germanic language family, close relative of English ('Anglo-Frisian')
- Spoken along the North Sea coast in the Middle Ages; today three separate areas:
    - West Frisian (Fryslân in The Netherlands)
    - East Frisian (Niedersachsen)
    - North Frisian (Nordfriesland in Schleswig-Holstein)
- Historical contact with different neighbouring languages: Dutch, (Low) German, Danish dialects
- Significant dialectal variation within Frisian (but many dialects now extinct)

The Frisian languages (from Nielsen & Larsen 2009)

Wangerooge Frisian

- East Frisian dialect (or language) on the Wadden Sea island Wangerooge; some 400 inhabitants c. 1840 (Versloot 1996a: lii)
- *Neujahrsflut* 1854/1855, resulting in evacuation of the speakers to the mainland → "broken transmission"
- A survey in 1892 found 32 remaining speakers, "fast nur Erwachsene" ("Correspondenzen" 1892)
- The last two speakers are said to have died in 1950, but these may have been semi-speakers (Versloot 1996a: liv)

Documentation of Wangerooge Frisian

- Good documenation, mainly thanks to H. G. Ehrentraut (1798–1866)
    - Lawyer and exceptionally talented 'hobby linguist'
    - Field work on Wangerooge 1837–1841
    - Developed a transcription system and collected texts, paradigms, and material for a dictionary
    - Some of the material appeared in *Friesisches Archiv* (1849–1854), the rest published by Arjen Versloot in Ehrentraut (1996)
- Also a few shorter texts (e.g. Littmann 1922, Siebs 1923), *Wenkersätze* (Bosse 2021: 510–513), and some sound recordings
- Corpus of some 100,000 words in total, "eine reichhaltige Grundlage für das Studium der Syntax" (Versloot 2001: 424)

H. G. Ehrentraut (1798–1866)
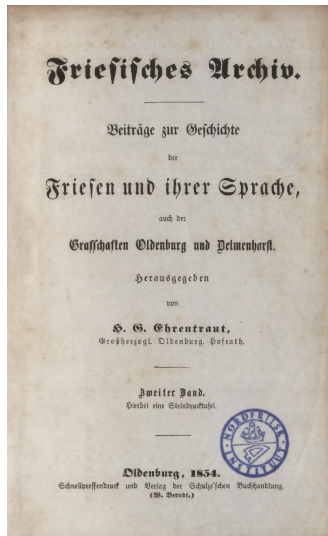
Friesisches Archiv, vol. 2 (Ehrentraut 1854)

Earlier research

- Word lists and paradigms in Ehrentraut (1849)
- A few works on historical phonology in the early 20th century (Siebs 1901, Löfstedt 1932)
- Some more recent work on phonology and morphology
  - e.g. Versloot (1996b, 2002), Hoekstra (1998, 2008), Stiles (2008), and Bosse (2012)
- My plan: comprehensive grammatical description which can be used by both Frisian scholars and general linguists

Section 2

Word order in *dat*-clauses

What are complement clauses?

(1) *They said* [*that they were going to the StuTS*]

- **COMPLEMENT CLAUSE**: subordinate clause with distribution similar to a noun phrase (cf. *They said a lot of things*)
- **COMPLEMENTIZER** (COMP): morpheme indicating the complement clause (e.g. *that*)
- **COMPLEMENT-TAKING PREDICATE** (CTP): verb or other predicate allowing or requiring a complement clause (e.g. *said*)

Wangerooge Frisian complementizers

- *dat* 'that' – 'neutral' complement clauses
- *wut* 'if' – polar ('interrogative') complement clauses
- *huu* 'how', *weer* 'where', *wut* 'what', etc.
- no complementizer – rare (?), only after utterance ('say') and propositional attitude predicates ('think')

'Embedded V2' in Germanic

- Variation in subordinate clauses in most Germanic languages: 'verb-second' (V2) or later position for the finite verb (V3, V-final, V-late)

- Differences between languages (e.g. Vikner 1995; Heycock 2017) as well as dialectal/idiolectal variation within languages (e.g. Pedersen 1996; Bentzen 2014)

Complement clauses with V-late

(2) *iik häb   mii   dait farflócket,* [*dat   iik dait nich doo*
     I   have.1sg myself that promised   comp I   that not do.inf
     weil]
     would.1sg
     'I have promised myself that I wouldn't do that'

Complement clauses with V2

(3) *da   qua   dju o$_e$l hex to de moget,* [*dat   yu*
     then say.3sg def.f old witch to def maid   comp she
     sil   *de   aúven heit máckii*]
     must.3sg def oven hot make.inf
     'Then the old witch tells the maid that she has to heat the
     oven'

Word order pattern: V-late

Table 1: Constituent order in V-late clauses

Comp	Subj	Middle field	V_{infin}	V_{fin}	Final field
dat	iik	dait nich	doo	weil	
COMP	I	that not	do	would	
dat	wii		erleízd	wúurden	fon de Frantsóoz
COMP	we		released	were	from the French

Word order pattern: V2

Table 2: Constituent order in V2 clauses

Comp	F	V_{fin}	Middle field	V_{infin}	Final field
dat	yu	sil	de aúven heit	máckii	
COMP	she	must	the oven hot	make	
dat	hii	sil	siin maam deer s'laang	hool	in 't snácken
COMP	he	must	his mum there so long	keep	in conversation

'Embedded V2' – a few proposals

- Vikner (1995: 70–72) on Danish and German: V2 licensed by different complement-taking predicates
- de Haan (2001) on West Frisian: *dat*-clauses with V2 are a special type of coordinated clauses
- Julien (2007, 2009) on Scandinavian: V2 used for embedded assertions
- Jensen & Christensen (2013) and Christensen et al. (2020) on Danish: V2 expresses foregrounded information ("main point of utterance")
- Caplan & Djärv (2019) on Swedish: V2 expresses new information

Method

- Searched for *dat* in the Ehrentraut material and identified all relevant clauses manually
- After this I noted the following:
    - Word order: V2, V-late, n/a
    - Function of the *dat*-clause: object, subject, prepositional complement, nominal complement, etc.
    - Complement-taking predicate (CTP) for the object clauses
- Classified the CTPs according to Noonan's (2007) typology

V2 vs. V-late: first observations

- V-late clearly more frequent, but large amount of V2 in:
  - Object clauses (c. 30% V2)
  - Nominal complements (10 out of 18 have V2)
    *da kricht yu órdër, dat yu **sil** bi de gro_ev kumme*
    'then she gets the instruction [that she has to go see the count]'

- Wangerooge Frisian can be classified as 'limited' (Vikner 1995)
  or 'narrow embedded' V2 (Walkden & Booth 2020)

V2 vs. V-late: count

Table 3: V2 and V-late i *dat*-clauses

Function of *dat*-clause	V2	V-late	n/a	Total
Object	**87**	194	18	299
Subject	2	24	1	27
Complement in PP		15		15
Complement in AdjP		20		20
Complement in NP	**10**	8		18
Misc.	1	2		3
Total	100	263	19	383

CTPs with object *dat*-clauses

Table 4: Types af CTPs after Noonan 2007 (with equivalents in Hooper &
Thompson 1973)

CTP type	Example	H&T 1973
Utterance	*quídder* 'say'	Type A
Propositional attitude	*leiv* 'believe'	Type B
Commentative	REFL *frau* 'rejoice'	Type D ('factives')
Knowledge	*wítte* 'know'	Type E ('semifactives')
Fear	gr_eoot 'dread'	
Perception	*sjoo* 'see'	Type E ('semifactives')
Desiderative	*wul* 'want'	
Manipulative	*uurréed* 'persuade'	
Achievement	*tóolauk* 'make sure'	

Word order after CTP types

Table 5: Distribution of V2 and V-late in object *dat*-clauses

Type of CTP	Example	V2	V-late	n/a	Total
Utterance	*quídder* 'say'	**72**	40	4	116
Prop. attitude	*leiv* 'believe'	5	22	2	29
Commentative	REFL *frau* 'rejoice'	1	9	–	10
Knowledge	*wítte* 'know'	1	28	2	31
Fear	*gr$_e$oot* 'dread'	–	3	–	3
Perception	*sjoo* 'see'	3	39	4	46
Desiderative	*wul* 'want'	–	25	6	31
Manipulative	*uurréed* 'persuade'	5	7	–	12
Achievement	*tóolauk* 'make sure'	–	21	–	21
Total		87	194	18	299

V2 in reported utterance

(4) **Manipulative complement – also reported utterance**

daa   bíddert yuu noch eerst, [*dat   yaa **silt**   hírii hírii*
then ask.3sɢ she yet first   ᴄᴏᴍᴘ they must.ᴘʟ her her
twein góolen ring   reik]
two   golden ring[ᴘʟ] give.ɪɴꜰ
'Then she first asks them to give her her two golden rings'

V2 in reported utterance

(5) **Complement in NP – also reported utterance**

nu sant de Súltan ään stavë't naa dan oor
now send.3sg DEF sultan one.M dispatch after DEF.M other
naa de kaizder too, [*dat hi* **wul** *him sáafël jil*
after DEF emperor to COMP he will.3sg him so.much money
reik jéerëlks]
give.INF yearly

'Now the sultan sends one dispatch/message after the other
to the emperor [saying] that he will give him so much money
every year'

V-late after 'promise, swear'

(6) **Commissive utterance predicate**

hii swäärt   stein un bein kort, [*dat   hii 't nich dain*
he swear.3sg stone and bone short comp he it not done
hää]
have.3sg

'He is swearing on his life that he didn't do it'

V-late after *quídder* 'say'

(7) **Utterance predicate with V-late**

daa thánket hii erst an dan ring, dat dait wüüf dait
then think.3sg he first on def.m ring, comp def.n woman it

quíтнiin hää, [*dat dan ring him noch feel goods*
said have.3sg comp def.m ring him yet much good

schaf kan]
get.inf can.3sg

'Then he first thinks of the [magical] ring, that the woman had said that the ring can get him all kinds of good things'

V2 after *mein* 'think'

(8) **Propositional attitude predicate**

den gúnget yaa up 't   liif lídzen ... dat daa síiliichs
then go.PL   they on DEF.N body lie.GER ... so DEF.PL seals
*mein   silt   [dat   dait **sint** uk síiliichs]*
think.INF must.PL COMP that are also seals

How to catch seals: 'Then they lie down on their stomachs
[and move their heads and legs up and down] so the seals will
think that those are also seals'

Section 3

Conclusions and perspectives

Summary of findings

- Wangerooge Frisian has 'limited' or 'narrow embedded' V2 – subordinate clauses allow V2 order under special circumstances
- V2 in *dat*-clauses almost exclusively in reported utterances, except after 'promise' verbs
    - This includes 'utterance nouns' like *breif* 'letter', *order* 'command', *stavét* 'messenger, message', and *úrtel* 'verdict'
    - V-late, on the other hand, almost obligatory after commentative, knowledge, perception, and *achievement* predicates
- Choice of V2 dependent on assertion, foregrounding, or something else? Hard to be sure with a dead language (cf. Walkden & Booth 2020: 538)

Future plans

- Description of *wut*-clauses and other clause types (relative, adverbial)
- Description of complement clauses without a complementizer – same system as the *dat*-clauses?
- Comparison with (Low) German and the other Frisian languages

Thank you for your attention!

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Comments and questions are always welcome:
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