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Expletives, locatives, and subject doubling

1 Introduction

This paper focuses on *there*-expletives in a Brabant dialect of Dutch and shows how they display behavior that perfectly parallels that of regular subject pronouns in this dialect.¹ The paper is organized as follows. The next section provides some background on the pronominal system of the dialect under discussion here. I show that it makes a distinction between three types of pronouns (strong, weak, clitic), and that it features two types of pronominal doubling. Section 3 presents the new data and shows how expletive elements fit into the pronominal system outlined in the preceding section: they too make a distinction between deficient and strong forms, and they can undergo both types of pronominal doubling. In addition, I show that contrary to what is commonly assumed in the literature, the proximate locative adverb *here* can also display expletive(-like) behavior. Section 4 considers the implications of these data for existing analyses of *there*-expletives. I show that neither the standard Minimalist account nor predication-based theories are particularly suited to deal with these facts, and sketch the outlines of an alternative approach. Section 5 sums up and concludes.

2 Background: The pronominal system

2.1 Introduction

The central data in this paper come from one dialect of Dutch, namely that of the village of Wambeek (situated in the Belgian province of Brabant, close to

¹ Many thanks to Will Harwood, Sabine Iatridou, Dany Jaspers, Marjo van Koppen, Koen Roelandt, Jolijn Sonnaert, Cora Pots, Guido Vanden Wyngaerd, and the students of my Spring 2016 morphology class for discussion of the material presented in this paper. A special thanks also to Hilda Van Der Borght and Jef Van Craenenbroeck for invaluable help with the judgments. It gives me great pleasure to be able to dedicate this paper to Rita Manzini. It combines a number of topics which I know are dear to her heart – dialect syntax, subject doubling, expletives, and (apparent) homophony between functional categories – so I very much look forward to her insightful comments.

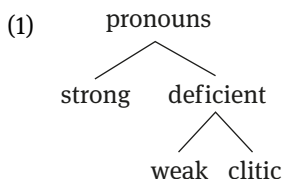
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the border with East Flanders).² This section provides an introduction into the pronominal system of this dialect. It is against this backdrop that the expletive data in the next section will be presented and interpreted. I highlight two aspects of the Wambeek Dutch pronominal system: (1) the fact that Cardinaletti & Starke (1999)'s tripartition into strong, weak, and clitic pronouns is also applicable to this dialect (subsection 2.2), and (2) the fact that subject pronouns can undergo two types of pronominal doubling (subsection 2.3).

2.2 Three degrees of deficiency

As is well-known, Cardinaletti & Starke (1999) (henceforth C&S) provide an analysis of the internal structure and complexity of the pronominal system and in so doing arrive at a tripartition of increasingly structurally complex pronominal forms. Their system can be summarized as follows:



The first distinction is between strong and deficient pronouns, and the latter group can be further subdivided into weak pronouns on the one hand and clitics on the other. The three groups can be distinguished from one another on semantic, morphosyntactic, and phonological/prosodic grounds. C&S don't discuss Dutch pronouns (let alone non-standard varieties of this language), but Van Craenenbroeck & van Koppen (2000) show that the same tripartition can be applied to a variety of Dutch dialects (see also Haegeman 1990, 1992, 1993 for related discussion based on West Flemish). Consider for example the forms for the first person plural subject pronoun in the dialect of Wambeek in (2).

² Informal consultation with informants from other dialects and regiolects as well as some preliminary corpus research suggests that the data patterns discussed in this paper are by no means restricted to this one dialect, but a systematic exploration of the variation in this area will have to await another occasion. For some discussion of expletive-related dialectal diversity in Dutch, see Haegeman 1986 and Van Craenenbroeck 2011.

- (2) *me / we / waaile*
 we we we
 ‘we’

These three forms for the first person plural correspond nicely to the tripartition in (1). Let us use two tests from Van Craenenbroeck & van Koppen (2000) to illustrate this. First of all, as pointed out by C&S, strong pronouns differ from deficient ones in that they can be clefted. As shown in (3), this distinguishes the form *waaile* from the other two in (2).

- (3) *T zen { * me / * we / waaile } da da muten duun.*
 it are we we we that that must do
 ‘It’s we who have to do that.’

On the other hand, pronominal clitics in (varieties of) Dutch are typically enclitic, which means that they differ from both weak and strong pronouns in being disallowed in sentence-initial position³:

- (4) { * *Me / We / Waaile* } *komme mergen.*
 we we we come tomorrow
 ‘We’re coming tomorrow.’

When taken together (and in combination with the other tests discussed in Van Craenenbroeck & van Koppen 2000), the examples in (3) and (4) provide a unique characterisation for each of the three forms in (2), thus lending credence to the hypothesis that the C&S-tripartition is operative in Wambeek Dutch as well. One thing that should be pointed out, though, is that it is relatively rare to find three morphologically distinct forms for the same pronoun. By far the more common pattern is one that only distinguishes between a strong and a deficient form. Given that this is also the pattern we will come across in the expletive paradigm in the next section, it is worth looking at it in a little more detail here. Consider in this respect the forms for the third person feminine singular subject pronoun in (5).

³ Another way of interpreting the pattern in (4) is via C&S’s claim that while weak and strong pronouns are XPs, clitics are syntactic heads. If this is on the right track, the clitic *me* would be unable to satisfy the V2-requirement of Wambeek Dutch.

- (5) *ze / zaai*
 she she
 ‘she’

We can interpret such forms in (at least) three ways: (1) there is no subject clitic for the third person feminine singular in Wambeek Dutch, (2) there is no weak subject pronoun for the third person feminine singular in Wambeek Dutch, or (3) the subject clitic and weak subject pronoun for the third person feminine singular are homophonous in Wambeek Dutch. The following table schematically represents the three options:

- (6)
- | | clitic | weak | strong |
|-----------|-----------|-----------|-------------|
| | | <i>ze</i> | <i>zaai</i> |
| <i>ze</i> | | | <i>zaai</i> |
| <i>ze</i> | <i>ze</i> | | <i>zaai</i> |

The next subsection will show that there are good reasons to think that the third option is correct: one type of subject doubling is limited to clitics, while another excludes clitics, and *ze* is able to participate in both.

2.3 Two types of doubling

Many of the Flemish dialects of Dutch exhibit subject doubling (see Haegeman 1991, 1992; Van Craenenbroeck & van Koppen 2002, 2008; De Vogelaer 2005; De Vogelaer & Devos 2008 for discussion and references). An important thing to note about this phenomenon is that it comes in two types. The first is illustrated in the following example.

- (7) *We emme waaille ie niks te zien.*
we_{weak} have we_{strong} here nothing to seek
 ‘We have no business being here.’

In this example the subject is expressed twice: once in clause-initial position by the weak pronoun *we* ‘we’ and once in post-verbal position by the strong pronoun *waaille* ‘we’. While the status of the second subject element is fixed – i.e. it is always a strong subject pronoun – the first is subject to variation. In particular, apart from weak pronouns, also strong pronouns, full DPs (9), and proper

names (10) can be doubled in this way. Clitics, however, are excluded, as shown in (11).⁴

(8) *Waaile emme waaile ie niks te zieken.*
 we_{strong} have we_{strong} here nothing to seek
 ‘We have no business being here.’

(9) *Dei vrou ei zaai ie niks te zieken.*
 that woman has she_{strong} here nothing to seek
 ‘That woman has no business being here.’

(10) *Marie ei zaai ie niks te zieken.*
 Marie has she_{strong} here nothing to seek
 ‘Marie has no business being here.’

(11) **Me emme waaile ie niks te zieken.*
 we_{clitic} have we_{strong} here nothing to seek
 INTENDED: ‘We have no business being here.’

The generalization that weak pronouns can but clitics cannot be doubled in this way allows us to go back to an issue that was raised in the previous subsection, i.e. the status of the deficient third person feminine singular subject pronoun *ze*. As shown in (12), this element can occur in sentence-initial position in a doubling configuration, showing that it should at least be analyzed as a weak pronoun (while still leaving open the option that it is homophonous between a clitic and a weak pronoun).

(12) *Ze ei zaai ie niks te zieken.*
 she_{weak} has she_{strong} here nothing to seek
 ‘She has no business being here.’

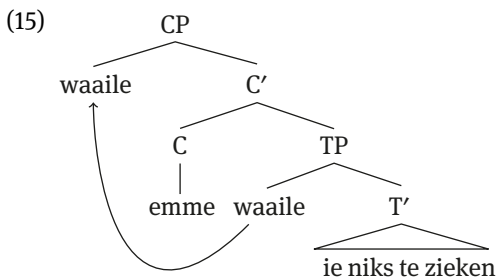
The type of doubling illustrated in the preceding examples is commonly referred to as topic doubling (for reasons that will become clear below). It is

⁴ The precise status of the sentence-initial pronominal element – clitic or weak pronoun? – is an issue that has garnered some discussion in the literature, see esp. the debate between Haegeman 1992, 2004 and Van Craenenbroeck & Van Koppen 2002, 2007b. However, given that most of the controversy is about (a dialect of) West Flemish, not about the dialect under consideration here, I gloss over it in what follows.

restricted to subject-initial main clauses, i.e. it does not occur in embedded clauses (13) or in inverted main clauses (14).

- (13) **omda waaile waaile ie niks te zieken emmen.*
 because we_{strong} we_{strong} here nothing to seek have
 INTENDED: ‘because we have no business being here.’
- (14) **Gisteren aume waaile waaile ie niks te zieken.*
 yesterday had we_{strong} we_{strong} hier nothing to seek
 INTENDED: ‘We had no business being here yesterday.’

As for the analysis of topic doubling, Van Craenenbroeck & van Koppen (2002) propose to treat it as a case of multiple spell-out: the subject moves from the canonical subject position (say, specTP) into the left periphery,⁵ and rather than undergoing deletion, the lower copy of this movement chain is spelled out as a strong pronoun. The structure in (15) gives a schematic representation of this analysis for the example in (8).



A major advantage of this type of approach is that it provides a straightforward explanation for the distribution of topic doubling. Given that the analysis crucially involves specCP as one of its ingredients, the account correctly predicts that topic doubling should be absent in embedded clauses (where specCP cannot be filled in Dutch, cf. Hoekstra & Zwart 1994) and inverted main clauses (where specCP is filled by some other element, cf. the adverb *gisteren* ‘yesterday’ in (14)).

⁵ More specifically, to specTop, whence the name topic doubling. See Van Craenenbroeck & Van Koppen 2002 for certain interpretive effects in topic doubling with indefinite and interrogative subjects supporting this analysis.

The second type of subject doubling attested in Dutch dialects (including Wambeek Dutch) is clitic doubling. It is illustrated in (16).

- (16) *omdat n aai ma guid elpen.*
 because he_{clitic} he_{strong} me goes help
 ‘because he’s going to help me.’

A clitic-doubled subject always consists of a clitic as the first subject element and a strong pronoun as the second element.⁶ Note that clitic doubling can also involve the deficient pronoun *ze* ‘she’ as its first element, cf. (17). In combination with the topic doubling sentence in (12), this example thus shows that Wambeek Dutch has both a clitic and a weak pronoun for the third person feminine singular, but that they happen to be homophonous (i.e. the third option in the table in (6)).

- (17) *omda ze zaai ma guid elpen.*
 because she_{clitic} she_{strong} me goes help
 ‘because she’s going to help me.’

Clitic doubling only occurs in embedded clauses (17) and inverted main clauses (18); it is disallowed in subject-initial main clauses (19).

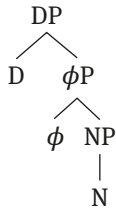
- (18) *Guit n aai ma elpen?*
 goes he_{clitic} he_{strong} me help
 ‘Is he going to help me?’
- (19) **N guid aai ma elpen.*
 he_{clitic} goes he_{strong} me help
 INTENDED: ‘He’s going to help me.’

Rather than copy spell-out, Van Craenenbroeck & van Koppen (2008) propose that clitic doubling involves a so-called big DP (see also Belletti 2005; Uriagereka 1995; Laenzlinger 1998; Grohmann 2000; Poletto 2008; Kayne 2005), whereby a clitic doubled subject like *ze zaai* in (17) starts life as a single DP, and the occurrence of the clitic is due to subextraction of part of that DP. More specifically,

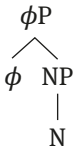
⁶ See Van Craenenbroeck & van Koppen 2008 for some exceptions involving coordinations of pronouns. As this complication is not relevant in the context of this paper, I don’t discuss it here.

Van Craenenbroeck and Van Koppen use the tests from Déchaine & Wiltschko (2002) to show that while Wambeek Dutch strong subject pronouns are DPs, subject clitics are ϕ Ps:

(20) **strong subject pronoun**

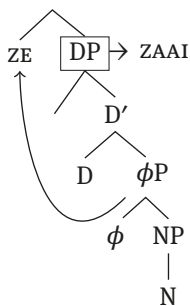


(21) **subject clitic**



This means that subject clitics are quite literally subparts of strong subject pronouns. Clitic doubling now arises when a ϕ P subextracts from DP (in this particular case because it is attracted by C, see the original paper for details): the moving ϕ P is spelled out as the clitic and the remaining DP as the strong pronoun:

(22) **clitic doubled subject pronoun**



Note that nothing precludes topic doubling and clitic doubling from co-occurring in one and the same example: a sentence-initial subject element could be topic doubled by a strong subject pronoun, which is in turn clitic doubled by a subject clitic. Such cases of tripling do indeed occur:

- (23) *We emme me waaile ie niks te zieken.*
 we_{weak} have we_{clitic} we_{strong} here nothing to seek
 ‘We have no business being here.’

This concludes my overview of the subject doubling options in Wambeek Dutch. Before turning to expletives, however, there is one point that has remained implicit in the discussion so far but is worth emphasizing in the context of what follows: the only type of pronominal doubling attested in Dutch dialects is *subject* doubling. In other words, doubling of any other type of constituent is categorically ruled out. The following examples illustrate this for direct objects: both topic doubling (24) and clitic doubling (25) of direct objects is completely impossible.

- (24) **Em em ik em gezien.*
 him_{strong} have I him_{strong} seen
 INTENDED: ‘I saw him yesterday.’
- (25) **da k n gisteren em wou elpen.*
 that I him_{clitic} yesterday him_{strong} wanted help
 INTENDED: ‘that I wanted to help him yesterday.’

This ban on non-subject doubling also applies to locative expressions. The following examples illustrate this for topic doubling. Note that the result is ill-formed regardless of whether the locative adverb is an argument (26) or an adjunct (27).⁷

- (26) **Dui em ek dui gewoentj.*
 there have I there lived
 INTENDED: ‘I used to live there.’
- (27) **Dui ei Jef Marie dui gezien.*
 there has Jef Marie there seen
 INTENDED: ‘Jef saw Marie there.’

⁷ These examples are grammatical under an irrelevant reading, whereby the two *there*'s refer to different (sizes or types of) locations, e.g. in (26) to indicate that in that city (there₁) I used to live in that house (there₂). I abstract away from such readings here and in the remainder of the paper. See Maienborn 2001 for relevant discussion.

As for the question of whether locative expressions can be clitic doubled, that requires first establishing that Wambeek Dutch has locative clitics to begin with. Interestingly, the structural configuration of subject clitic doubling provides a clear diagnostic for this. As pointed out by Van Craenenbroeck & van Koppen (2007a), the only elements that can intervene between the two parts of a clitic doubled subject are other clitics. This can be illustrated on the basis of pronouns that make a morphophonological distinction between weak and clitic pronouns (see above, subsection 2.2). Consider in this respect the following examples.

(28) *da ze { n / * em } zaai gezien eit.*
 that she_{clitic} him_{DO.clitic} him_{DO.weak} she_{strong} seen has
 ‘that she saw him.’

(29) *da ze zaai { * n / em } gezien eit.*
 that she_{clitic} she_{strong} him_{DO.clitic} him_{DO.weak} seen has
 ‘that she saw him.’

The third person masculine singular deficient object pronoun in Wambeek Dutch makes a morphophonological distinction between the clitic *n* and the weak pronoun *em*. As these examples show, when the object occurs in between the two parts of a clitic doubled subject, only the clitic form can be used, while to the right of the strong subject pronoun only the weak pronoun can appear. More generally, the possibility of occurring in between the two parts of a clitic doubled subject can be used as a diagnostic for clitic-hood in this dialect. Applying this test to the reduced form of the locative pronoun yields the following example.

(30) *da ze er zaai gewoendj eit.*
 that she_{clitic} there she_{strong} lived has
 ‘that she has lived there.’

The fact that the reduced form of the locative pronoun can occur in between the two halves of a clitic doubled subject shows that it is – or at least can be – a clitic. This means that we can now legitimately ask whether a locative expression can be clitic doubled. As the following example shows, the answer is negative.

(31) **da ze er zaai dui gewoendj eit.*
 that she_{clitic} there she_{strong} there lived has
 INTENDED: ‘that she has lived there.’

Summing up, this subsection has shown that Wambeek Dutch has two types of subject doubling. The first, topic doubling, involves a variety of subject expressions in first position and a strong subject pronoun in second position, and it is only found in subject-initial main clauses. The second is clitic doubling. It consists of a clitic pronoun and a strong pronoun, and only shows up in embedded clauses and inverted main clauses. The two doubling processes can co-occur in one and the same example, resulting in subject tripling. Non-subjects can never be doubled, regardless of which doubling strategy is used. This also holds for locative expressions.

3 The new data: Expletives as part of the pronominal system

3.1 Introduction

This section focuses on the expletive system of Wambeek Dutch. Just like English – and Standard Dutch for that matter – this dialect uses expletive pronouns that are morphologically related to locative adverbs. What I will show is that these expletive forms fit perfectly into the pronominal system of the dialect as outlined in the previous section. In particular, they make a distinction between strong and deficient expletive forms, with the latter being homophonous between clitics and weak pronouns (subsection 3.2), and they can be both topic and clitic doubled (subsection 3.3). In addition, I show that even though it never loses its locative interpretation, the proximate locative adverb *here* can also display expletive-like behavior in this dialect (subsection 3.4).

3.2 Strong vs. deficient expletives

As is well-known (see for example Bennis 1986), Standard Dutch makes use of the form *er* ‘there’ as its expletive element in *there*-sentences. This *er* is the weak or reduced form of the distal locative adverb *daar* ‘there’, which is not used as an expletive. At first glance, Wambeek Dutch is no different in this respect: it uses the weak form *d'r* as its expletive pronoun. This is illustrated in (32)–(34).⁸

⁸ Due to voice assimilation and /t/-deletion, the deficient expletive pronoun can surface as *d'r*, *t'r*, or *er*. Given that I have been unable to find any differences in syntactic behavior

- (32) *D'r stui ne vantj inn of.*
ER stands a man in.the garden
'There's a man in the garden.'
- (33) *Stuit t'r ne vantj inn of?*
stands ER a man in.the garden
'Is there a man in the garden?'
- (34) *da t'r ne vantj inn of stuit.*
that ER a man in.the garden stands
'that there is a man in the garden.'

Unlike in Standard Dutch, however, the strong form of the distal locative adverb can also be used as an expletive pronoun in Wambeek Dutch. Consider in this respect the following example.

- (35) *Dui stui ne vantj inn of.*
there stands a man in.the garden
'There's a man in the garden.'

As is clear from the English translation, the form *dui* 'there' adds no locative meaning to the sentence (or at least not necessarily, see fn. 10 below) and as such functions as a pure expletive here. This reading can be brought out more clearly by adding an additional, conflicting locative expression such as *ie* 'here' or *genner* 'over there' to the sentence.⁹ This is illustrated in (36).

- (36) *Dui stuid ie/genner ne vantj inn of.*
there stands here/over.there a man in.the garden
'There's a man here/over there in the garden.'

Moreover, the example in (35) becomes infelicitous in its intended meaning when the associate DP *ne vantj* 'a man' is replaced by a definite expression such as a proper name:

between these three forms, I treat them as different surface manifestations of the same underlying element, and I gloss all of them as ER.

⁹ Wambeek Dutch has a tripartite distance-based locative system, which makes a distinction between proximate *ie* 'here', medial/distal *dui* 'there', and distal *genner* 'over there' (a cognate of the archaic English form *yonder*).

- (37) # *Dui stui Jef inn of.*
 there stands Jef in.the garden

This example is not ungrammatical, but has a very specific interpretation. Imagine for instance that we are looking through a bunch of photos. I could point at one and utter the sentence in (37) to indicate that in that picture (i.e. there), Jef is standing in the garden.¹⁰ The purely existential reading, however, in which *dui* ‘there’ adds no locative information, is lost in this example.

Another way to clearly bring out the non-locative, i.e. expletive, use of *dui* ‘there’ concerns sentences in which a locative dimension is completely absent, such as the existential sentence in (38). As the number of prime numbers smaller than ten is not tied to a particular location, a locative reading for *dui* would lead to a pragmatically odd or infelicitous sentence. Given that the example is perfectly well-formed, however, such a locative reading is missing, and *dui* is being used as a pure expletive pronoun.

- (38) *Dui zen mo vier priemgetalle klanjer as tien.*
 there are only four prime.numbers smaller as ten
 ‘There are only four prime numbers smaller than ten.’

Note that the expletive use of *dui* is not restricted to sentence initial position. The declarative existential in (38) can be turned into an inverted main clause (39) or an embedded clause (40), without loss of the expletive reading.

- (39) *Zen dui mo vier priemgetalle klanjer as tien?*
 are there only four prime.numbers smaller as ten
 ‘Are there only four prime numbers smaller than ten?’

- (40) *omda dui mo vier priemgetalle klanjer zen as tien.*
 because there only four prime.numbers smaller are as ten
 ‘because here are only four prime numbers smaller than ten.’

Summing up, Wambeek Dutch has both a strong and a deficient expletive pronoun, and as such its expletive constructions mimic the structure of its pronominal system. Moreover, the two expletives are not completely interchangeable.

¹⁰ That same reading – *mutatis mutandis* – is also available in (35). Note that in both cases, the locative reading of *dui* requires heavy stress on this element. See below for more detailed illustration and ways of disambiguating such sentences.

For example, let's compare the two *dui*-examples in (39) and (40) with their *d'r*-counterparts in (41) and (42).

(41) *Zen er mo vier priemgetalle klanjer as tien?*
 are ER only four prime.numbers smaller as ten
 'Are there only four prime numbers smaller than ten?'

(42) *omda t'r mo vier priemgetalle klanjer zen as tien.*
 because ER only four prime.numbers smaller are as ten
 'because there are only four prime numbers smaller than ten.'

The examples in (41) and (42) are the most neutral way of expressing either the question or the (embedded) statement that there are only four prime numbers smaller than ten. The sentences in (39) and (40) express the same propositional content, but add emphasis or surprise, or they contradict a negative presupposition or a preceding statement. For example, one of my informants gives as a context for the question in (39) a math quiz, where someone has just listed the prime numbers smaller than ten and I want to grill him some more by asking something like 'Are there *really* only four prime numbers smaller than ten?' or 'Are you *sure* that there are only four prime numbers smaller than ten?'. This means that it is not only the case that Wambeek Dutch makes use of strong and deficient forms both in its pronominal and in its expletive system, the added emphasis that goes along with using a strong form is also present in both systems.

One question I have not tackled yet is what kind of deficient element *d'r* is exactly: a clitic or a weak pronoun? In order to answer that question it will be instructive to look at the doubling patterns expletive pronouns occur in. This is the topic of the next subsection.

3.3 Subject doubling of expletives

The strict subject requirement on pronominal doubling (see above, subsection 2.3) in combination with the fact that Wambeek Dutch has locative-based expletive pronouns allows us to test a central assumption that is shared by many existing accounts of *there*-expletives, namely the fact that *there* occupies the structural subject position (see Hartmann 2008:chapter 1 and section 4 below for an overview of different types of analyses, and see Bennis 1986 for an analysis of Standard Dutch *er* that does not share this assumption). Barring orthogonal intervening factors, expletive subjects should in principle be able to be doubled just like non-expletive ones (all the more so in light of the previous

subsection, which has shown expletives to be like regular subject pronouns in having both strong and deficient forms). Let us first turn our attention to topic doubling. Consider the example in (43).

- (43) *Dui eit dui niemand me Jef geklapt.*
 there has there no-one with Jef talked
 ‘No-one spoke with Jef (there).’

This example contains two instances of the strong locative adverb *dui* ‘there’, with one of them clause-initial and the other in the immediately post-verbal position. As such, the example closely parallels the topic doubling one in (8). Note also that the example in (43) does not necessarily have a locative interpretation, suggesting that in (at least one version of) this example we are dealing with two instances of expletive *dui*, rather than, for example, a combination of expletive *dui* and locative *dui*. This can be brought out more clearly by adding a second, conflicting locative modifier, as in (44).

- (44) *Dui leit dui ie e vliegsken op men and.*
 there lies there here a fly.DIM on my hand
 ‘There’s a fly on my hand.’

The proximate locative adverb *ie* ‘here’ situates the state of affairs described in this sentence as being in the (extreme) vicinity of the speaker, thus showing that neither of the two *dui*’s adds any locative meaning.¹¹ Now, if (43) and (44) indeed represent cases of topic doubling of the expletive pronoun *dui*, we predict this pattern to be unavailable in embedded clauses and inverted main clauses (see above, examples (13) and (14)). At first glance, that prediction is not borne out, as the following two examples are perfectly well-formed:

- (45) *omda dui dui niemand me Jef geklapt eit.*
 because there there no-one with Jef talked has
 ‘because no-one spoke with Jef *(there).’
- (46) *Eit dui dui niemand me Jef geklapt?*
 has there there no-one with Jef talked
 ‘Did no-one speak with Jef *(there)?’

¹¹ Note that the example deliberately refers to a body part—and hence the extreme vicinity—of the speaker so as to make unlikely the kind of double locative reading described in fn. 7.

However, note that in both these examples there is an obligatory locative interpretation. This suggests that we are not dealing with pronominal doubling of the expletive element *dui*, but rather with a combination of expletive *dui* and locative *dui*. In other words, the type of doubling illustrated in (43) is restricted to subject-initial (or rather *dui*-initial) main clauses, exactly as would be expected from the description of topic doubling in subsection 2.3.¹² Summing up, the data just reviewed strongly suggests that, contrary to its homophonous locative counterpart (see above, the examples in (26) and (27)), the expletive use of the strong form *dui* ‘there’ can be topic doubled, just like regular subjects. This constitutes strong evidence in favor of analyzing *there*-expletives as occupying the structural subject position.

The existence of topic doubling in the expletive system also provides us with a first test to further determine the precise status of the deficient expletive form *d’r*. Recall from subsection 2.3 that weak pronouns can be topic doubled, but clitics cannot. If *d’r* can partake in expletive topic doubling, we know that it is (at least also) a weak pronoun. As the following example shows, this is indeed the case.

- (47) *D’r leit dui ie e vliegskén op men and.*
 ER lies there here a fly.DIM on my hand
 ‘There’s a fly on my hand.’

Turning next to the question of whether expletive subjects can also be clitic doubled, consider the following example.

- (48) *dat er dui nen boek op tuifel leit.*
 that ER there a book on tafel lies
 ‘that there is a book (there) on the table.’

¹² For completeness’ sake we can point out that the type of *dui*-doubling illustrated in (43) comes with a strong definiteness requirement on the thematic subject of the clause:

- (i) **Dui eit dui Marie me Jef geklapt.*
 there has there Marie with Jef talked
 INTENDED: ‘Marie spoke with Jef (there).’

Note that this judgment is expected both under a topic doubling analysis of (43) and under an analysis of this example as containing a combination of expletive *dui* and locative *dui*. As such, it doesn’t provide an additional argument in favor of the claim that expletives can be topic doubled in Wambeek Dutch.

The optionality of a locative interpretation in this example indicates that *dui* can once again be used as an expletive. Given that the sentence also contains an instance of the deficient expletive element *d'r*, this example features expletive doubling, albeit not topic doubling, but clitic doubling (see above, example (16)). This is further confirmed when we add another, conflicting locative modifier:

- (49) *dat er dui ie nen boek op tafel leit.*
 that ER there here a book on table lies
 'that there is a book here on the table.'

This sentence has a straightforward proximate interpretation, with *ie* serving as a locative modifier, *er* as the (expletive) subject clitic, and *dui* as the (equally expletive) strong doubling pronoun. What this suggests, then, is that expletive subjects can not only be topic doubled in Wambeek Dutch, but also clitic doubled. (Note also that this implies that the deficient expletive element *d'r* is homophonous between a clitic and a weak pronoun.) In fact, just like in the pronominal system (see above, example 2.3), expletive tripling is also attested:

- (50) *Dui eit er dui ie niemand me Jef geklapt.*
 there has ER there here no-one with Jef talked
 'No-one spoke with Jef here.'

This example contains four locative expressions. The proximate locative adverb *ie* 'here' serves as an adjunct and assigns a locative interpretation to the sentence. The other three elements, *dui*, *d'r*, and *dui*, do not add any such meaning and serve as expletive pronouns. The sentence-initial *dui* is topic doubled by the post-verbal one, which is in turn clitic doubled by *d'r*. Note, crucially, that these extensive co-occurrence options between locative expressions do not imply that anything goes. In fact, if we force multiple locative expressions into a configuration where subject doubling is independently disallowed, the multiple expletive reading disappears and a locative one becomes obligatory. Consider in this respect the following example.

- (51) *Dui is niks gebeed.*
 there is nothing happened
 'Nothing happened (there).'

As can be expected from the above discussion, this example is ambiguous between a locative and a non-locative (expletive) interpretation. If we add the

deficient expletive pronoun to the right of the verb, however, the second reading disappears:

- (52) *Dui is t'r niks gebeed.*
 there is_{ER} nothing happened
 'Nothing happened *(there).'

In this example, *dui* is necessarily locative, i.e. the option of expletive doubling is unavailable. This perfectly mimics the fact that in this type of configuration – a strong form followed by the verb followed by a weak form – pronominal subject doubling is also categorically excluded:

- (53) **Zaai ei ze ie niks te zieken.*
 she_{strong} has she_{deficient} here nothing to seek
 INTENDED: 'She has no business being here.'

Summing up, the Wambeek Dutch expletive system shares with its pronominal counterpart not only the distinction between strong and deficient forms, but also the possibility of undergoing doubling. In particular, I have shown that expletive pronouns – unlike their homophonous locative counterparts – can undergo topic doubling, clitic doubling, and even tripling.

3.4 Expletive *here*

All the data I have examined so far featured the distal – or distal/medial, cf. fn. 9 – locative adverb *dui* 'there'. In this subsection I turn to its proximate counterpart *ie* 'here'. On the one hand, this element behaves exactly like a *bona fide* locative adverb in that it always retains its locative meaning. At the same time, however, it can be both topic and clitic doubled, and when it is, it imposes a definiteness restriction on the thematic subject, just like regular expletive pronouns.

Consider first the following example. It is identical to the one in (35), except that the distal locative *dui* 'there' has been replaced by the proximate *ie* 'here'.

- (54) *Ie stui ne vantj inn of.*
 here stands a man in.the garden
 'There's a man in the garden *(here).'

Note that unlike the example in (35) the locative contribution of the clause-initial locative adverb is obligatory, suggesting that *ie*, unlike *dui*, cannot be

used as an expletive pronoun. This intuition is further confirmed if we consider some more examples from the preceding sections but with *dui* replaced by *ie*:

- (55) #*Ie zen mo vier priemgetalle klanjer as tien.*
 here are only four prime.numbers smaller as ten
 ‘There are only four prime numbers smaller than ten here.’
- (56) *Ie is niks gebeed.*
 here is nothing happened
 ‘Nothing happened *(here).’

In both these examples *ie* makes an obligatory locative contribution (resulting in a pragmatically odd sentence in (55)). Neither of them allows for the location-neutral, expletive interpretation. Similarly, when *ie* is combined with other, conflicting locative expressions, the result is ill-formed¹³:

- (57) **Ie stuid genner ne vantj inn of.*
 here stands over.there a man in.the garden
 INTENDED: ‘There’s a man over there in the garden.’

In short, in accordance with what has been reported in the literature on expletives (see in particular Kayne 2008:195–196), the proximate locative adverb seems to lack the expletive uses of its distal counterpart. With that much as background, consider the following example.

- (58) *Ie eid ie niemand me Jef geklapt.*
 here has here no-one with Jef talked
 ‘No-one spoke with Jef *(here).’

This example contains two instances of *ie*, yet its interpretation reveals only a single proximate modification.¹⁴ This means that at least one of the two *ie*’s is used as an expletive pronoun here (recall from examples (26) and (27) that locative modifiers cannot be doubled, so the two *ie*’s cannot be instances/copies of the same locative element). This is further confirmed by the fact that this construction imposes a strong definiteness requirement on the thematic subject of

¹³ More accurately: the only reading allowed in (57) is the double locative one described in fn. 7.

¹⁴ The double locative reading of fn. 7 is not impossible here, but very marked. It also requires heavy stress on both instances of *ie*, while the neutral pronunciation of (58) has the main stress falling on *niemand* ‘no-one’.

the sentence, illustrated in (59). (Note that such a requirement is absent when the sentence contains only a single *ie* as in (60).)

- (59) **Ie eid ie Marie me Jef geklapt.*
 here has here Marie with Jef talked
 INTENDED: ‘Marie spoke with Jef here.’

- (60) *Ie eit Marie me Jef geklapt.*
 here has Marie with Jef talked
 ‘Marie spoke with Jef here.’

The *ie*-doubling example in (58) resembles an instance of topic doubling with two strong subject pronouns (see above, example (8)), but at the same time it could also be analyzed as the combination of a locative and an expletive use of *ie*. As it turns out, however, it is also possible to have three instances of *ie*:

- (61) *Ie eid ie ie niemand me Jef geklapt.*
 here has here here no-one with Jef talked
 ‘No-one spoke with Jef *(here).’

The interpretation of this example is identical to the one in (58), i.e. there is only one (proximate) locative specification. This means that the other two *ie*’s are expletive pronouns. More specifically, not only can the proximate locative adverb be used as an expletive, in that capacity it can also undergo topic doubling. It is important to stress, though, that even in its topic doubled expletive use, *ie* still retains its locative interpretation. This can be shown by replacing the third *ie* in (61) by a conflicting locative expression such as *genner* ‘over there’.

- (62) **Ie eid ie genner niemand me Jef geklapt.*
 here has here over.there no-one with Jef talked
 INTENDED: ‘No-one spoke with Jef over there.’

Given that (61) has shown that *ie* can be (topic doubled and) used as an expletive pronoun, it should in principle be possible to combine it with a conflicting locative expression such as *genner* ‘over there’ (see above, example (44)). The ill-formedness of (62) shows that this is not the case. This means that even in its use as an expletive pronoun, *ie* still retains its proximate locative interpretation.

Having established that *ie* can be topic doubled, this raises the question of whether it can be clitic doubled as well. The following example suggests that that is indeed the case.

- (63) *Eit er ie ie niemand me Jef geklapt?*
 has ER here here no-one with Jef talked
 ‘Did no-one speak with Jef here?’

There are three locative expressions in this example: the deficient expletive pronoun *d'r* and two instances of *ie*. Once again, the meaning of the sentence reveals only a single proximate dimension. This suggests that the other two elements are expletive in nature. In other words, it suggests that the expletive element *ie* is clitic doubled. Not surprisingly, then, the combination of topic doubling and clitic doubling, i.e. tripling, is also possible in the case of *ie*. This is shown in (64).

- (64) *Ie eit er ie ie niemand me Jef geklapt.*
 here has ER here here no-one with Jef talked
 ‘No-one spoke with Jef here.’

Summing up, even though *ie* adds a proximate locative meaning to every sentence that contains it, it can undergo topic doubling and clitic doubling, two operations otherwise strictly preserved for XPs occupying the structural subject position. Moreover, whenever *ie* is doubled, it shows a defining characteristic of an expletive pronoun in that it imposes a definiteness requirement on the thematic subject. All of this suggests that in Wambeek Dutch the proximate locative adverb can be used as an expletive pronoun.

3.5 Summary

This section has examined the expletive system of Wambeek Dutch. I have shown that expletive pronouns fit into the pronominal system of this dialect in two ways: (1) they can be subdivided into strong and deficient forms (with the latter homophonous between clitics and weak pronouns), and (2) they can be pronominally doubled, both via topic doubling and via clitic doubling. In addition, the section has revealed that the proximate locative adverb also has an expletive use, in spite of it never occurring without its locative interpretation. The next section examines some of the implications of these findings for existing theories of *there*-expletives and sketches the outlines of an alternative approach.

4 Towards a new analysis of *there*-expletives

The generative literature on *there*-expletives is vast and it is not my intention to provide an exhaustive discussion of it in this paper (see Hartmann 2008: chapter 1 for an overview). What I do want to do in this section, though, is point out how the data presented in the previous section raise non-trivial questions for most if not all existing accounts of *there*-expletives, and sketch the outlines of an alternative approach that overcomes (at least some of) these problems.

Broadly speaking, we can identify two strands of analysis in the literature. The first is what one could call the canonical Minimalist approach (cf. Chomsky 2000). The central idea is that a *there*-expletive is a meaningless element that is inserted in the structural subject position (specTP) in order to satisfy some formal requirement that is imposed on that position (be it the EPP, an EPP-feature, an edge feature, or some other formal implementation of the same idea). This approach seems to be at odds with several of the findings described above. First of all, recall that Wambeek Dutch makes a distinction between strong and deficient expletive pronouns, and that the choice of a strong form over a deficient one has an impact on the interpretation of the sentence (see the discussion of the examples in (39)–(42)). This is quite unexpected from the point of view of *there* as a mere formal placeholder that makes no contribution to the meaning of the sentence. Secondly, recall that the proximate element *ie* can be used as an expletive even when it retains its locative interpretation. Consider in this respect the following example.

- (65) *Ie woendj ie niemand nie.*
 here lives here no-one not
 ‘No-one lives here.’

In this example *ie* on the one hand clearly displays subject- and expletive-like properties: it is topic doubled and it imposes a definiteness requirement on the thematic subject. On the other hand, however, this element is not a meaningless placeholder: not only does it contribute a locative meaning to the sentence, it also serves as the (obligatory) internal argument of the locational verb *woenen* ‘to live’. In other words, the standard Minimalist account of *there*-expletives seems to be a non-starter for the Wambeek Dutch data introduced in the previous section.

The other type of analysis of *there*-expletives starts from the idea that *there* is base-generated lower than specTP as a meaningful element of the structure (typically a predicate of some sort) and that it subsequently raises to specTP

(possibly to satisfy the same formal requirement that drives *there*-insertion in the standard Minimalist account), see for example Moro (1997). At first glance, this type of account holds more promise for the Wambeek Dutch facts, as it takes into account the possibility that the expletive pronoun makes a semantic contribution to the clause. At the same time, however, the contexts in which *there* can be base-generated according to these accounts – which are mostly based on English *there*-sentences – constitute only a subset of the contexts in which Wambeek Dutch expletives can be found. In particular, *there* has been argued to be the predicate of a small clause (Moro 1997; Dikken 1992), the subject of such a small clause (Williams 1994; Hazout 2004), the spell-out of a spatio-temporal event variable (Kiss 1996; Ramchand 1996; Felser & Rupp 2001), and a presuppositional adjunct (Bennis 1986), and while these characterisations work well in the face of simple existential or locational sentences such as *There are many problems (in the world)* (Cresti & Tortora 1999:62), Wambeek Dutch expletives (exemplified here by *ie*-doubling) occur in a much wider variety of contexts: they can spell out the internal argument of a two-place predicate (66), an adjunct in an intransitive sentence (67), an adjunct in a transitive sentence (68) (a so-called transitive expletive construction, cf. Vikner 1995), or an adjunct in an impersonal passive (69). It is hard to see how all of these constructions could be reduced to the small set of *there*-configurations proposed in the literature.¹⁵ Instead, the use of locative expressions as expletives seems to be parasitic on their use as locative adverbs: any structure that can host the adverb, be it as an adjunct or as an argument, can serve as the basis for the expletive use of this element. As far as I can tell, this is an intuition that none of the existing accounts of *there*-expletives incorporates.

(66) *Ie leid ie ginnen boek.*
 here lies here no book
 ‘There’s no book lying here.’

(67) *Ie eid ie ne noenkel va mou gewerkt.*
 here has here an uncle of me worked
 ‘An uncle of mine used to work here.’

¹⁵ The same conclusion holds for Kayne’s 2008 analysis, whereby *there* originates as a DP-internal modifier inside the associate DP and subsequently (remnant-)moves to specTP.

(68) *Ie eid ie niemand nen boek gekocht.*
 here has here no-one a book bought
 ‘No-one bought a book here.’

(69) *Ie wedj ie gezeid dat Jef ziek is.*
 here becomes here said that Jef ill is
 ‘People are saying here that Jef is ill.’

Suppose we took this intuition as the starting point for an analysis of *there*-expletives in Wambeek Dutch: the expletive use of *dui* and *ie* (and possibly *d'r*)¹⁶ is parasitic on their use as *bona fide* locative expressions. More specifically, whenever the structural subject position remains empty (because the subject is indefinite (Vangsnes 2002) or because there is no subject, like in impersonal passives, cf. (69)), a locative expression can be moved into this position.¹⁷ While such a movement operation might seem unorthodox at first glance, it accords well with an observation that has been around in the literature on Dutch *there*-expletives since the early days (see for example Bennis 1986:214; Zwart 1992; Lightfoot 2002:95n4), i.e. the fact that the Dutch expletive pronoun *er* can be left out when it is followed by a locative expression. Interestingly, this idea is picked up and further worked out by Klockmann et al. (2015). On the basis of an online survey of 671 native speakers of Dutch, they observe that it is specifically the locative adverbs *daar* ‘there’ and *hier* ‘here’ that have this effect. Consider first two of their baseline examples, which show that Dutch is subject to an EPP-requirement, i.e. specTP can not remain empty willy-nilly.

(70) *Werd *(er) gedanst?*
 became there danced
 ‘Was there dancing?’ (Standard Dutch)

¹⁶ I will mostly focus on the strong expletive pronouns *dui* and *ie* in what follows. While an account along the lines sketched below is also possible for the deficient form *d'r*, this element could also be given a standard Minimalist analysis in most of the contexts in which it occurs. See also fn. 18.

¹⁷ While I will leave the precise nature of this movement operation open, two options readily come to mind. One would be to assimilate it to Icelandic Stylistic Fronting (Holmberg 2000), another would be to endow T with a locative or distal feature along the lines of Ritter & Wiltschko 2009, which could then be checked by raising a locative expression to specTP, cf. Klockmann et al. 2015 (and see also Pots 2016 for related discussion).

- (71) *Gedanst werd *(er)*.
 danced became there
 ‘There was dancing.’ (Standard Dutch)

In the presence of the locative adverbs *daar* ‘there’ and *hier* ‘here’, however, the expletive pronoun is no longer obligatory:

- (72) *Werd (er) hier/daar gedanst?*
 became there here/there danced
 ‘Was there dancing here/there?’ (Standard Dutch)

Interestingly, this effect is absent (a) when the locative element is not linearly adjacent to the expletive (73), or (b) when a non-locative adverb like *toen* ‘then’ is used instead (74). In fact, Klockmann et al. (2015) show that for many speakers even full locative PPs don’t resort the same effect as *hier* ‘here’ and *daar* ‘there’ (75).

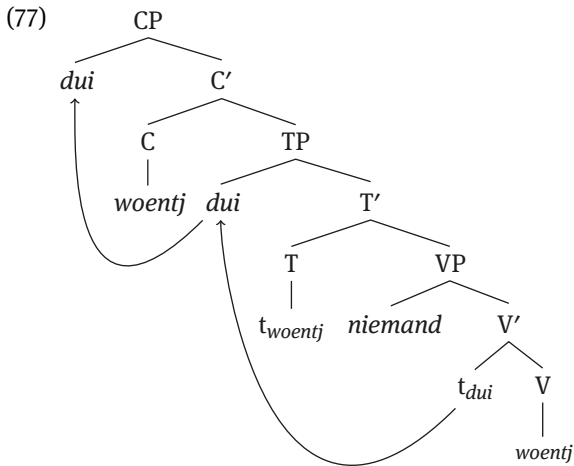
- (73) *Werd *(er) wel gedanst daar?*
 became there PRT danced there
 ‘Was there really dancing there?’ (Standard Dutch)

- (74) *Werd *(er) toen gedanst?*
 became there then danced
 ‘Was there dancing at that time?’ (Standard Dutch)

- (75) *Werd %(er) in het park gedanst?*
 became there in the park danced
 ‘Was there dancing in the park?’ (Standard Dutch)

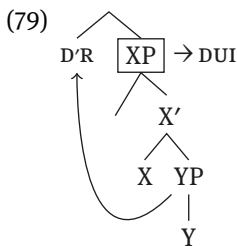
Like Klockmann et al. (2015) I take this to mean that in the absence of another filler of specTP, the locative adverbs *hier* ‘here’ and *daar* ‘there’ can move into this position. Moreover, given that the judgments in (70)–(75) carry over to Wambeek Dutch, I assume that the same analysis is applicable to this variety. What distinguishes Wambeek Dutch from Standard Dutch, is the fact that elements that occupy specTP in the dialect can be pronominally doubled. For instance, if *dui* ‘there’ moves on from specTP into the left periphery and the lower copy of this movement chain is spelled out, an expletive topic doubling configuration is derived. For the example in (76), this yields the (simplified) derivation in (77).

- (76) *Dui woentj dui niemand.*
 there lives there no-one
 ‘No-one lives there.’



Similarly, the existence of expletive clitic doubling suggests that locative adverbs are morphologically complex, and that the deficient form *d'r* can be analyzed as a structural subset of the strong forms *dui* and *ie* (cf. also Rooryck 2003). Without going into any details regarding the categorial status of locative adverbs or the functional projections making up such elements, this means that the clitic doubled expletive pronoun in an example like (48) (repeated below as (78)) can be abstractly structurally represented as in (79).

- (78) *dat er dui nen boek op tuifel leit.*
 that ER there a book on tafel lies
 ‘that there is a book (there) on the table.’



Summing up, the expletive facts from Wambeek Dutch reviewed in the previous section suggest that morphologically locative expletive pronouns can be parasitic on the regular locative use of these elements (be it as an argument or as an adjunct).¹⁸ They move from their base position to specTP (see fn. 17 for possible implementations) and from there on are incorporated into the regular subject system of the language (which in the case of Wambeek Dutch includes the possibility of pronominal doubling). Neither the standard Minimalist analysis of *there*-expletives (Chomsky 2000) nor the predicate raising approach (Moro 1997) seems particularly suited to handle these facts.

5 Summary and conclusion

This paper has focused on *there*-expletives in a dialect of Dutch. I have shown that expletive elements show a remarkable similarity to the system of subject pronouns in this variety, in two ways: on the one hand, expletives show a distinction between strong and deficient elements, while on the other they can be pronominally doubled. In addition, an in-depth exploration of the data revealed that contrary to a commonly held opinion in the literature on *there*-expletives, the proximate locative adverb *here* can also be used as an expletive in Wambeek Dutch. These previously undiscussed facts raise significant challenges for existing accounts of *there*-expletives. Accordingly, I have sketched the outlines of an alternative approach, in which the expletive behavior of locative elements is made — or at least can be made — parasitic on their regular locative use.

18 Note that the account presented here leaves open the possibility of different types of expletives co-existing in a single language (see also Zwart 1992), see also fn. 16 on the reduced expletive pronoun *d'r*. Such an approach might also be suggested by examples such as (61), repeated below as (i).

- (i) *le eid ie ie niemand me Jef geklapt.*
 here has here here no-one with Jef talked
 'No-one spoke with Jef *(here).'

Unless we want to say that the three *ie*'s represent three spelled-out copies in a single movement chain, the most plausible analysis of this example would be to assume that the third *ie* is a(n unmoved) regular locative adjunct, while the first two are copies of the same expletive element, which is base-generated in specTP, as per the standard Minimalist account. Similarly, the ambiguity of the basic example in (35) (cf. fn. 10) might be due to the possibility of base generating *dui* either in an adjunct position or directly in specTP. I leave the exploration of this 'double analysis' of *there*-expletives in varieties of Dutch as a topic for further research.

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