

SpecCP-expletives are main clause complementizers

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The whole talk in a nutshell

- SpecCP-expletives in Dutch dialects are main clause complementizers in C, not personal pronouns in specCP.
- They are inserted as a Last Resort option to prevent a V2-violation.
- Microvariation with respect to specCP-expletives can be reduced to a parameter regulating the split/unsplit nature of the CP-domain.

The basic data: specCP-expletives

Dialects with a specCP-expletive ([+C]-dialects):

- (1) T zyn drie studenten gekommen.
EXPL are three students come
'Three students came.' Lapscheure Dutch
- (2) Zyn *t/dr drie studenten gekommen?
are EXPL/there three students come
'Did three students come?' Lapscheure Dutch
- (3) da-n *t/dr drie studenten gekommen zyn
that-PL EXPL/there three students come are
'that three students came.' Lapscheure Dutch

Dialects without a specCP-expletive ([-C]-dialects):

- (4) *T/Dr stuit iemand inn of.
EXPL/there stands someone in.the garden
'There's someone in the garden.' Wambeek Dutch
- (5) Stui *t/dr iemand inn of?
stands EXPL/there someone in.the garden
'Is there someone in the garden?' Wambeek Dutch
- (6) da *t/dr iemand inn of stuit
that EXPL/there someone in.the garden stands
'that there's someone in the garden.' Wambeek Dutch

(Grange and Haegeman (1989), Haegeman (1986), L. Haegeman p.c., H. Van Der Borgh p.c.)

The bigger picture: empirical correlations

Expletive drop in inversion: * in [+C]-dialects, ✓ in [-C]-dialects

- (7) Zittn *(dr) ier nievers geen muzn?
sit there here nowhere no mice
'Aren't there any mice here?' Torhout Dutch
- (8) Zittn (dr) ie nievest gin mozzjn?
sit there here nowhere no mice
'Aren't there any mice here?' Wambeek Dutch

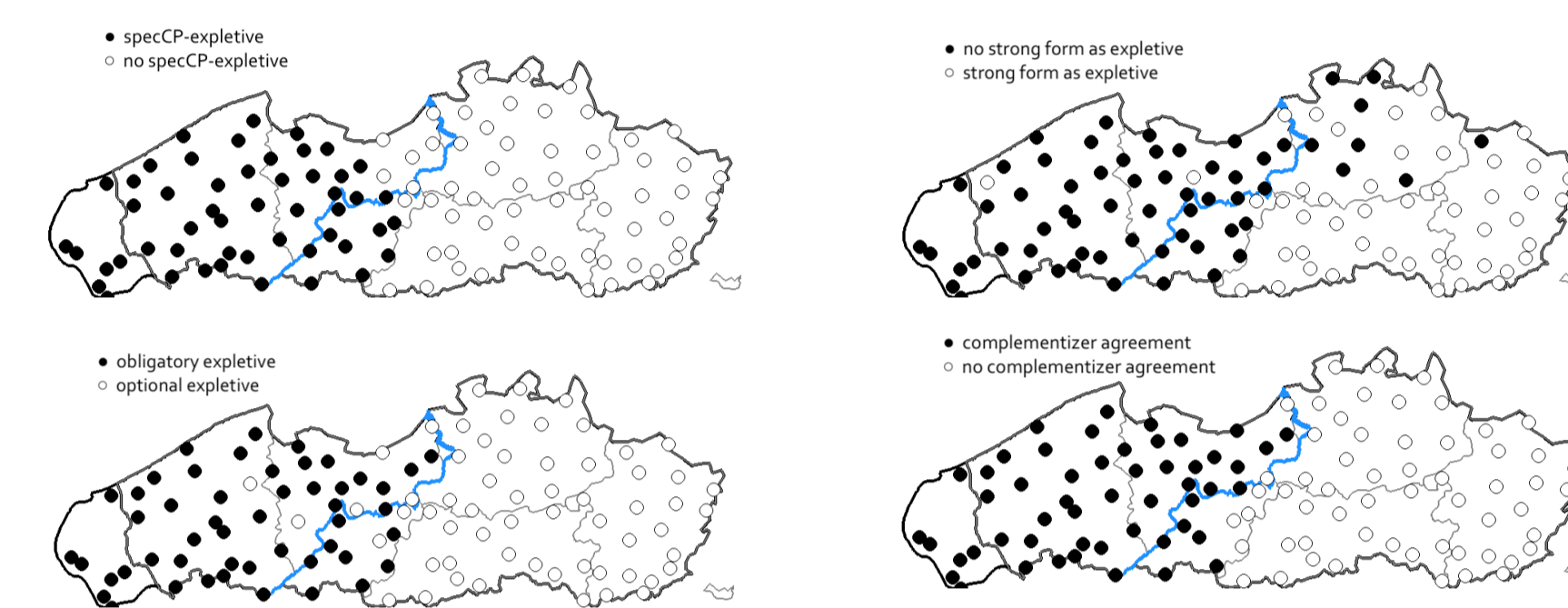
Strong locative as expletive: * in [+C]-dialects, ✓ in [-C]-dialects

- (9) Ligt { *doa /er } ier nen brief ip tafel?
lies there.STRONG / there.WEAK here a letter on tabel
'Is there a letter over here on the table?' Lapscheure Dutch
- (10) Leit { dui /dr } ie nen brief op tuifel?
lies there.STRONG / there.WEAK here a letter on tabel
'Is there a letter over here on the table?' Wambeek Dutch

Complementizer agreement: ✓ in [+C]-dialects, * in [-C]-dialects

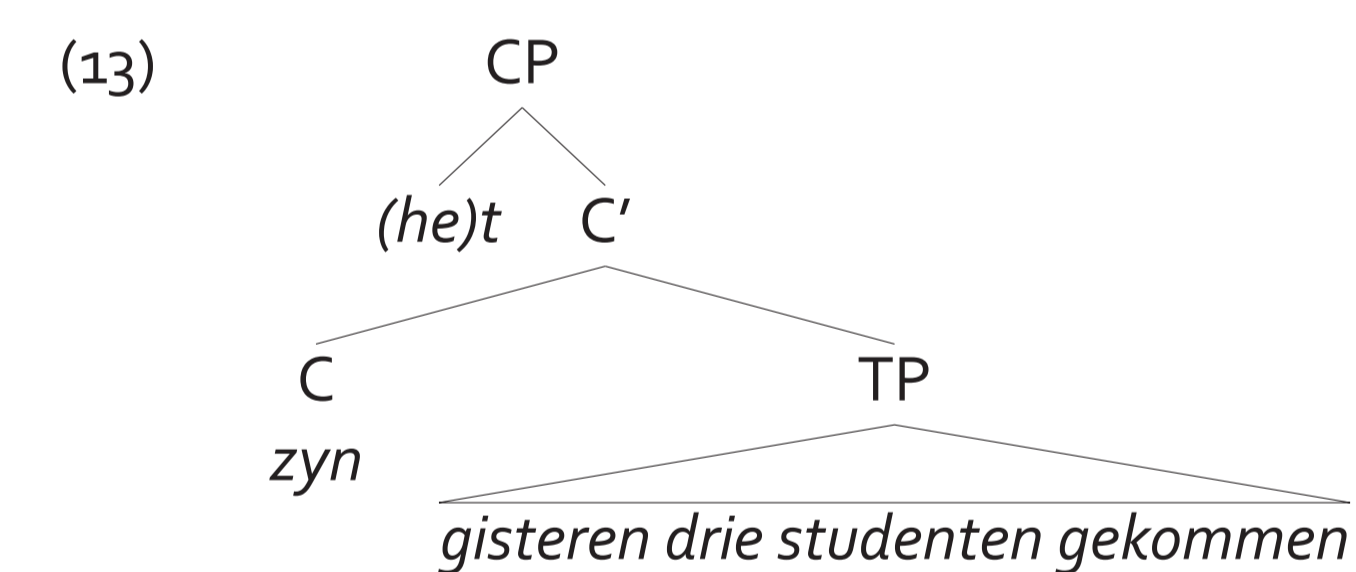
- (11) K=vinden da-n die boeken te diere zyn.
I=find that-PL those books too expensive are
'I think those books are too expensive.' Lapscheure Dutch
- (12) K=paus da(*-n) ze gonj kommen.
I=think that(-PL) they go come
'I think they'll come.' Wambeek Dutch

(Barbiers et al. (2006), Haegeman (1992), L. Haegeman p.c., H. Van Der Borgh p.c.)



	[+C]-dialects	[-C]-dialects
specCP-expletive	yes	no
obligatory expletive in inversion	yes	no
strong locative form as expletive	no	yes
complementizer agreement	yes	no

The traditional account and its shortcomings



problem#1: *het* 'it' is disallowed in specCP (Zwart 1993, 1997)

- (14) *T een=k nie gezien.
it have=I not seen
INTENDED: 'I haven't seen it.' Lapscheure Dutch

problem#2: *het* 'it' can be replaced by *dat* 'that' (Grange and Haegeman 1989), but not the specCP-expletive

- (15) dat et/da regent.
that it/that rains
'that it is raining.' Lapscheure Dutch
- (16) T/Da 's Valère nie die da gezeid oat.
it/that is Valère not REL that said had
'It isn't Valère who said that.' Lapscheure Dutch
- (17) T/*Da zyn drie studenten gekommen.
EXPL/that are three students come
'Three students came.' Lapscheure Dutch

problem#3: *het* 'it' can be pronounced as [ɔt] (Vanacker 1978), but not the specCP-expletive

- (18) (E)t regent.
it rains
'It is raining.' Blankenberge Dutch

- (19) (*E)t staan drie mannen in den hof.
EXPL stand three men in the garden
'There are three men standing in the garden.'

(Grange and Haegeman (1989), Haegeman (1993), K. Vanaudenaerde p.c.)

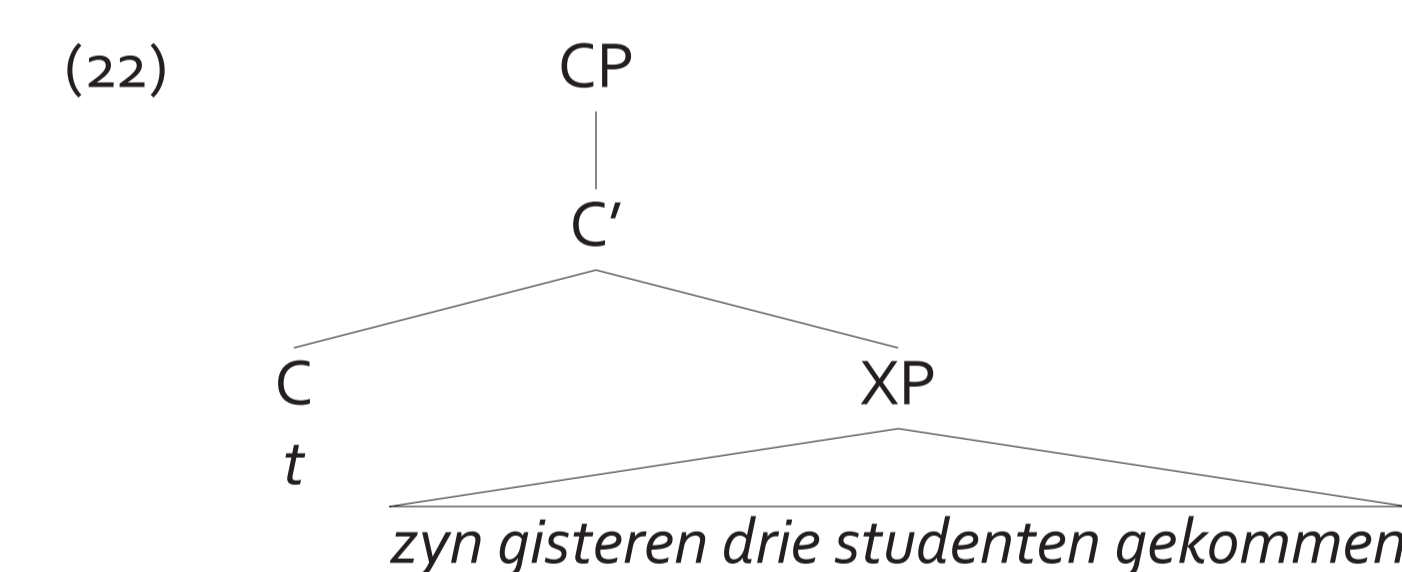
Towards a new account: Welsh & Breton

- (20) Bez' e-ra glav.
PRT Fin-does rain
'It rains.' Breton, Jouitteau (2011:5)
- (21) Fe glywes i'r cloc.
PRT heard.1SG the clock
'I heard the clock.' Welsh, Jouitteau (2008:168)

	Breton bez	Welsh fe	Dutch t
can occur in inversion	*	*	*
can be preceded by other material	*	*	*
can occur in embedded clauses	*	*	*
controls agreement on the verb	*	*	*

standard analysis of bez and fe: MAIN CLAUSE COMPLEMENTIZERS (Jouitteau 2005, 2008, 2011, Willis 1998, 2007, Borsley et al. 2007, Roberts 2005)

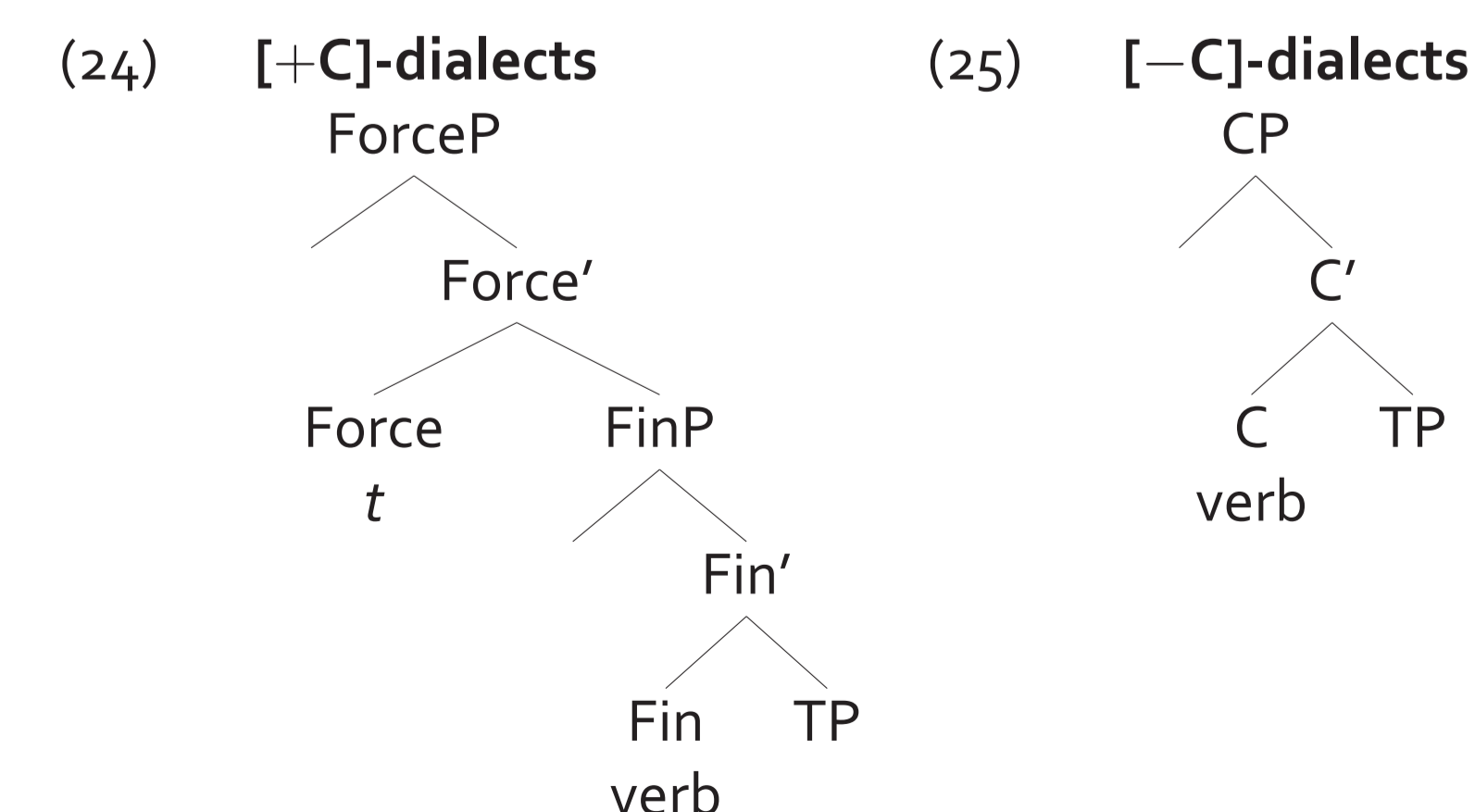
The analysis



→ *t* represents the Last Resort option of spelling out C in order to satisfy V2 → requires a rethinking of the V2-constraint, e.g. along the lines of Jouitteau (2020:455)'s Left Edge Filling Trigger: "a morphological obligatory exponence effect that we observe at the sentence level"

[+C]- vs. [-C]-dialects

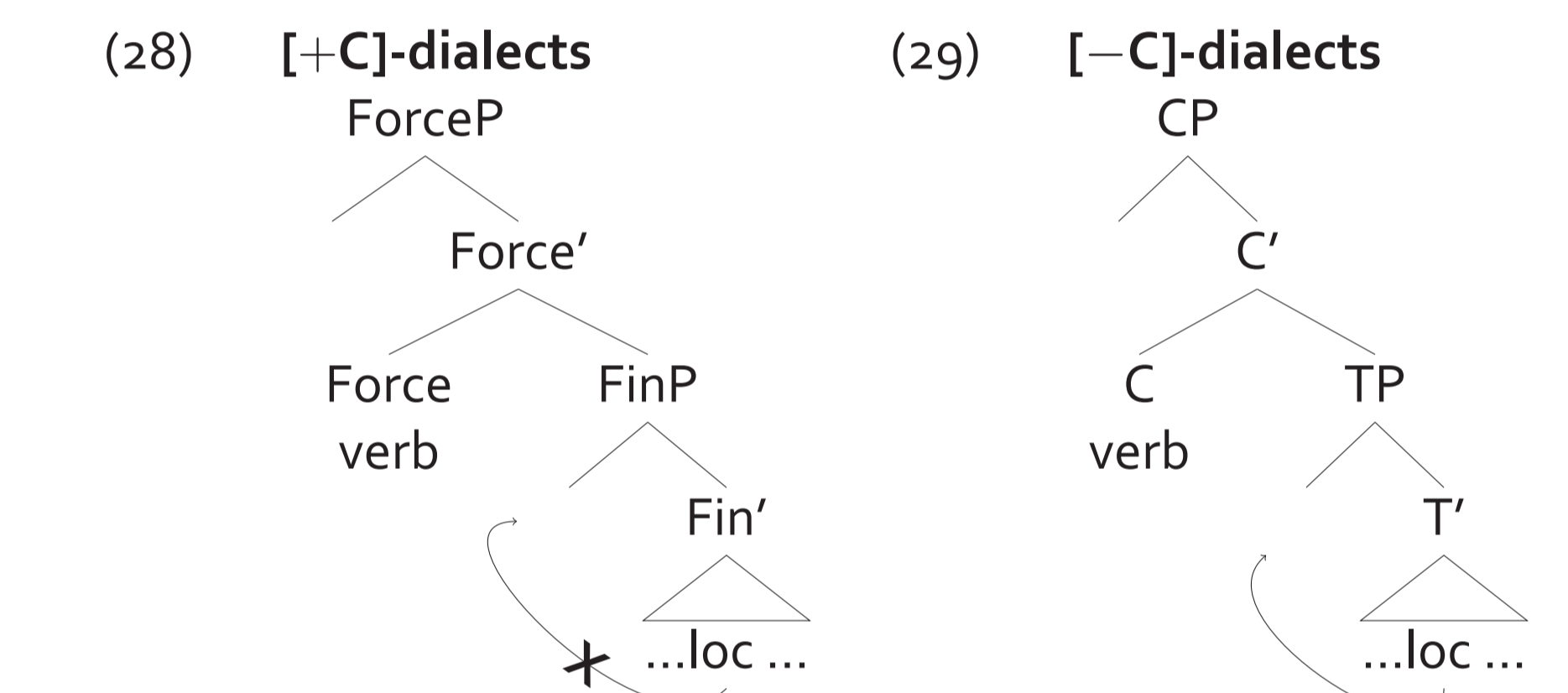
- (23) **The split-CP parameter:**
The CP-domain {is/is not} split up into separate projections.



- (26) [-C]-dialects = Zwart-type languages (Postma 2011)
subject-initial: [FinP subject [Fin verb]]
inverted: [ForceP XP [Force verb]] [FinP subject [Fin t_{verb}]]
- (27) [-C]-dialects = Den Besten-type languages (Postma 2011)
subject-initial: [CP subject [C verb]] [TP t_{subject} [T t_{verb}]]
inverted: [CP XP [C verb]] [TP subject [T t_{verb}]]

Revisiting the empirical correlations

Obligatory expletive in inversion: (7) and (8) show not only dropping of the expletive, but also raising of a locative adverb into the canonical subject position (Klockmann et al. 2015) → this movement is triggered by (a locative feature on) T and so is only allowed when the canonical subject position is specTP (= in [-C]-dialects) not when it is specFinP (= in [+C]-dialects)



Strong locative as expletive: originated in Middle Dutch exclusively in sentence-initial position → it occupied the marked specCP-position, while the weak form was used as a filler for specTP → such a division of labor is only possible in a variety that distinguishes between two types of subject positions, i.e. in [-C]-dialects

Complementizer agreement: requires an independent ϕ -specification on C and T (van Koppen 2005, 2017, Haegeman and van Koppen 2012) → C and T are more independent in [+C]- than in [-C]-dialects

Conclusion

Even *bona fide* V2-languages like (dialect) Dutch can sometimes resort to non-canonical (i.e. non-XP) ways of satisfying the V2-constraint (see also Haegeman (1990, 1992) on clause-initial clitics as heads, and De Clercq and Haegeman (2018) on main clause complementizer *die*).

References & full paper

