

Complex Left Branches in Frisian Verbs

Fenna Bergsma, Meg Smith, Jan Don, Anne Merkuur

In Nanosyntax, bound morphemes are stored pieces of syntactic structure (Starke 2013) that may differ in size and shape. In this talk, we examine three problematic patterns in the verb system of Modern West Frisian, a language in the West Germanic family, to show that size differences are not enough to account for the paradigm variation and that the shape of the verb roots also plays a critical role.

The first problem we discuss is that the zero-marked first person singular is morphophonologically simplex. This means that, on the surface, it does not appear to contain the multimorphemic second and third person forms that it contains underlyingly based on the functional sequence $\pi > \text{PARTICIPANT} > \text{SPEAKER}$ (Harley and Ritter 2002).

<i>bakke</i> 'to bake'	
3SG	bakt
2SG	bakst
1SG	bak

Table 1: *bakke*

The second problem is the so-called Wechselflexion described by Dammel (2010), which involves stem-allomorphy in some cells of the paradigm (see Table 2). The stem in the first person singular and plural forms is different from the stem in the second and third person singular.

<i>meitsje</i> 'to make'	
3SG	mākət
2SG	mākəst
1SG	maitsjə
PL	maitsjə

Table 2: *meitsje*

Finally, we will discuss a third phenomenon that combines the first two problems: a Wechselflexion paradigm with a morphologically simplex first person singular (see Table 3).

<i>sizze</i> 'to say'	
3SG	sait
2SG	saist
1SG	sis
PL	sizə

Table 3: *sizze*

To account for these paradigms, we will show that, besides the size of lexical entries, the shape of lexical entries (Blix 2021) is important. Time permitting, we will also discuss a number of open issues and directions for future research including the effect of the new formulation of the spellout algorithm upon our analysis.

References

Blix, Hagen. 2021. Phrasal spellout and partial overwrite: On an alternative to backtracking. *Glossa: a journal of general linguistics* 6:62.

Dammel, Antje. 2010. Wenn die 2. Person mit der 3. Person... Wechselflexion kontrastiv: Deutsch-Luxemburgisch-Westfriesisch-Färöisch. In *Kontrastive Germanistische Linguistik*, ed. Antje Dammel, Sebastian Kürschner, and Damaris Nübling, 473–522. Hildesheim: Olms.

Harley, Heidi, and Elizabeth Ritter. 2002. Person and number in pronouns: A feature-geometric analysis. *Language* 78:482–526.

Starke, Michal. 2013. Cleaning up the lexicon. *Linguistic Analysis* 39:245–256.