

Novelties and archaisms: insights in V2 violations in the endangered French Flemish dialects

In this talk I present my ongoing research on the position of the finite verb in declarative main clauses in the endangered French Flemish dialects. I focus in particular on the syntactic properties of the frequently occurring (superficial) V>2 word order.

The French Flemish dialects allow V>2 word order in a similar fashion as the other West Flemish dialects, though earlier research suggests that happens way more often than in the other West Flemish dialects. While there has been some research on V>2 in French Flemish, these studies are, especially with respect to the number of investigated locations, insufficient to give a clear picture of the origin of the structure and the role of possible language contact. My research intends to fill this gap.

Departing from the remarkable socio-historical and extralinguistic context which shapes the French Flemish dialects, I will present the results of a corpus study based on time-aligned transcriptions of spoken speech recorded in the 1960s of over 50 different locations in the North of France. I argue that the high incidence of superficial V>2 patterns in FF is the result of a complex mix of both archaisms and novelties, such as a higher incidence of non-integrated initial adverbial clauses (without resumptive adverbials) on the one hand, and main clause-introducing *het maakt* ('it makes') on the other hand.