Frame setters and the microvariation of subject-initial V2 in Standard Dutch and West Flemish

[1] The problem: West Flemish (WF) and Standard Dutch (StD) allow what look like V3 patterns in which an main clause external adjunct precedes and combines with a regular V2 clause. In such configurations, the initial adjunct is interpreted as a frame setter, introducing a topical constituent with respect to which the main clause proposition is interpreted as relevant:

(1) a. Als je honger hebt, er ligt kaas in de koelkast. \(\sqrt{\text{StD}}/\sqrt{\text{WF}}\)
   if you hungry are, there is cheese in the fridge
b. Als er morgen een probleem is, wie kan ik (dan) bereiken? \(\sqrt{\text{StD}}/\sqrt{\text{WF}}\)
   if there tomorrow a problem is, who can I (then) reach
c. Als er morgen een probleem is, mij moet je niet bellen. \(\sqrt{\text{StD}}/\sqrt{\text{WF}}\)
   if there tomorrow a problem is, me should you not call

Cross-linguistic comparison between WF and StD reveals that although clause-external (Broekhuis & Corver 2016), the distribution and interpretation of the initial constituent in V3 orders is sensitive to independent clause internal syntactic factors. In particular, an unexpected asymmetry is found between WF and StD with respect to their compatibility with subject-initial declaratives. Interpreted as a relevance conditional (1a), the main clause external adjunct is acceptable in V3 patterns with subject initial V2 declaratives both in WF and StD. However, when the adjunct provides a temporal or modal modification of the associated clause (1b,c), V3 order with subject-initial declaratives is acceptable in WF but is banned in StD (2a) and subject-verb inversion is needed to yield acceptable V2 order (2b), which is also acceptable in WF:

(2) a. Als mijn tekst klaar is, ik zal je hem opsturen. \(\ast\sqrt{\text{StD}}/\sqrt{\text{WF}}\)
   when my text ready is I will you him send
b. Als mijn tekst klaar is, zal ik je hem opsturen. \(\sqrt{\text{StD}}/\sqrt{\text{WF}}\)
   when my text ready is will I you him send

This data pattern raises two questions. The first concerns the difference between (2a) and the V3 patterns in (1). Since, at first sight, V3 patterns consist of extra-clusual constituents combining with regular V2 sentences for discourse reasons, the ungrammaticality of (2a) in StD raises the question of how the distribution and interpretation of these ‘clause-external’ frame setters can be constrained by the internal syntax of the main clause. This raises the general issue of the relation between clause-external elements and clause-internal syntax. The second question is what sets StD apart from WF. Since these two varieties behave alike in all relevant respects (as shown by 1), the contrast in (2a) suggests that the difference must rest in the relationship between the syntactic representation of discourse frame setters and the derivation of subject initial V2. We address these two questions. We first develop a general account of the syntax of discourse frame setters. Against this background, we account for the micro-variation observed in (2a) and in so doing shed light on the interface between syntax, semantics and discourse. Our account is based on two core ingredients: (i) we develop a syntax-to-discourse mapping for frame setters (with specific focus on temporal and conditional clauses); (ii) adopting the Force/Fin typology for V2 (Poletto 2013, Wolfe 2015), we argue that StD and WF differ in the way in which the derivation of subject initial V2 declaratives interacts with frame setters at the interface (as also shown in Mikkelsen 2015). [2] The syntax/Semantics of Discourse Frame Setters. The initial adjunct in V3 patterns like (1) is considered extra-sentential: it is compatible with all illocutionary forces and it lacks prosodic integration with the main clause. In addition to being used to frame the speech act (1a), the adjunct can also be used to introduce the frame that restricts the (temporal or modal) evaluation conditions of the proposition in the main clause ((1b,c), (2)). We propose that the main clause external adjunct is externally merged as the specifier of a discourse building functional head which takes a Frame Setter and a fully fledged V2 clausal constituent (ForceP), to create a topic-comment structure (3) interpreted as a structured meaning (4) (Krifka 1992):

(3) \[\text{FrameP} \{\text{Adjunct}\} \{\text{ForceP V2-clause}\}\]

(4) \[\langle[\text{XP}]\{\text{YP}\}\rangle = \langle[\text{XP}]\{\text{YP}\}\rangle\]

The syntactic structure of (3) expresses that the main clause is adjacent to the external frame and introduces a topic-comment structure in the main clause.

\[\text{FrameP} \{\text{Adjunct}\} \{\text{ForceP V2-clause}\}\]

A declarative clause in V3 order can then be represented as:

\[\langle[\text{XP}]\{\text{YP}\}\rangle = \langle[\text{XP}]\{\text{YP}\}\rangle\]

This representation captures the interaction between the syntax and semantics of discourse frame setters and the structure of the main clause.
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Frame Sets such as temporal and conditional clauses (though not relevance conditionals as in (1a); see Ebert et al. 2014) restrict the evaluation conditions of the proposition expressed by the main clause by means of a (possibly null) resumptive element located in a temporal/modal projection (Demirdache & Uribe-Etxebarria 2004). This resumptive element picks up the denotation of the Frame Setter restricting the evaluation conditions of the proposition (Bhatt & Pancheva 2006):

(5)  
\[[[[XP],[((\lambda v)YP)]]]] = ([[XP],[((\lambda v)YP)]]

We propose that, for a V3 configuration to receive the interpretation in (5), the clause external adjunct needs to attain in a local relation with the projection hosting the resumptive element and that in StD/WF non-declarative V2 patterns (1b) and non-subject-initial declarative V2 patterns (1c), the local configuration is created by a head-chain resulting from V2 movement of the finite verb to Force:

(6)  
a.  
\[\text{[[\text{ForceP Wic} \text{[[\text{Force V-fin} \text{[[\text{FinP twhp }[\text{Fin t_v-fin }[\text{SubjP }\ldots\text{t_v-fin}\ldots]]}]]}}]]}\] \text{\sqrt{StD/\sqrt{WF}}}

b.  
\[\text{[[\text{ForceP Mi} \text{[[\text{Force V-fin} \text{[[\text{FinP tDP }[\text{Fin t_v-fin }[\text{SubjP }\ldots\text{t_v-fin}\ldots]]}]]}}]]}\] \text{\sqrt{StD/\sqrt{WF}}}

[3] **Microvariation: subject-initial V2 declaratives.** The ungrammaticality of (2a) in StD suggests that in this variety the V3 configuration in (3) with the interpretation in (5) is unavailable with subject initial V2 declaratives. On the other hand, (2a) is accepted by speakers of WF, for whom the initial adjunct in (2a) can also be shown to be a main clause external constituent, i.e. one which is prosodically and interpretively non integrated with the main clause. We propose that as in other V3 patterns with a main clause external constituent (1b,c), the adjunct in (2a) is merged in SpecFrameP, as in (4) and that the contrast between StD and WF resides in a crucial difference in the derivation of subject-initial V2 declaratives: while in WF the finite verb moves to Force (7a), in StD it remains lower (7b):

(7)  
a.  
\[\text{WF: \[[\text{ForceP Subject }\text{[[\text{Force V-fin} \text{[[\text{FinP t_v-subj }[\text{Fin t_v-fin }[\text{SubjP }\ldots\text{t_v-fin}\ldots]]}]]}}]]}\] \text{\sqrt{StD/\sqrt{WF}}}

b.  
\[\text{StD: \[[\text{ForceP Subject }\text{[[\text{Force }\ldots\text{FinP t_v-subj }[\text{Fin V-fin }[\text{SubjP }\ldots\text{]]}]]}\] \text{\sqrt{StD/\sqrt{WF}}}

In StD (2a) is ruled out because the Frame Setter does not attain the required local relation with the temporal/modal domain, and hence does not satisfy the locality requirement on the interpretation represented in (5). On the other hand, in WF V2 movement of the finite verb to Force creates the required local configuration through head-chain formation. As a result, the adjunct in (2a) can modify the evaluation conditions of the associated proposition. [4] **Temporal relations and Frame setters.** Finally, we will discuss some interpretive restrictions on temporal frame setters in more detail. While temporal frame setters can restrict the reference time (RT) of the associated utterance with both periphrastic and simple tenses, they can only modify the event time (ET) with simple tenses. We will show that this asymmetry provides support to our analysis: in (8a) the initial adjunct can only attain a local relation with the chain created by the V2 moved aspectual auxiliary, whereas in (8b) the relevant chain is that created by the moved lexical verb:

(8)  
a.  
Oan-k toekwamen, den eletriek was uitgevallen.

When I arrived, there was a power cut  \text{(RT only)}

b.  
Oan-k toekwamen, den eletriek viel uit.

when I arrived, there was a power cut  \text{(RT or ET)}