Expletive doubling in Dutch dialects

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1 Introduction

• CENTRAL DATA
  – pronominal doubling of *there*-expletives in Dutch dialects
  – expletive-like behavior of the proximate R-proform *here*

• THEORETICAL ANALYSIS
  – the (dialect) Dutch R-proforms *er* ‘there’, *daar* ‘there’, and *hier* ‘here’ are in a structural subset-superset relation
  – (one type of) pronominal doubling is a Last Resort multiple spell-out mechanism

• BROADER IMPLICATIONS
  – neither doubling nor expletives represent true interface asymmetries
  – doubling is an optimal solution to two conflicting requirements (ban on too-local movement vs. [EPP]-feature on C)
  – R-proforms can be moved to specTP to check a [deictic]-feature and satisfy T’s EPP-requirement

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2 Background: pronominal doubling in Dutch dialects

2.1 Two types of doubling


type #1: pronoun doubling

(1) Waai le emme waai le ie niks te zien.
   we\text{strong} have \text{we\text{strong}} here nothing to seek
   ‘We have no business being here.’

properties:
1. the second subject element is always a strong pronoun; the first can be a strong pronoun (1), a weak pronoun (2), a full DP (3), or a proper name (4), but not a clitic (5)

(2) We emme waai le ie niks te zien.
   we\text{weak} have \text{we\text{strong}} here nothing to seek
   ‘We have no business being here.’

(3) Dei vrouw ei zaai ie niks te zien.
   that woman has \text{she\text{strong}} here nothing to seek
   ‘That woman has no business being here.’

(4) Marie ei zaai ie niks te zien.
   Marie has \text{she\text{strong}} here nothing to seek
   ‘Marie has no business being here.’

(5) *Me emme waai le ie niks te zien.
   \text{we\text{clitic}} have \text{we\text{strong}} here nothing to seek
   INTENDED: ‘We have no business being here.’

2. pronoun doubling is restricted to subject-initial main clauses; it doesn’t occur in embedded clauses (6) or in inverted main clauses (7)

(6) *omda waai le waai le ie niks te zien emmen.
   because \text{we\text{strong}} \text{we\text{strong}} here nothing to seek have
   INTENDED: ‘because we have no business being here.’

(7) *Gisteren aume waai le waai le ie niks te zien.
   yesterday had \text{we\text{strong}} \text{we\text{strong}} here nothing to seek
   INTENDED: ‘We had no business being here yesterday.’

type #2: clitic doubling

(8) omdat n aai ma guid elpen.
   because \text{he\text{clitic}} \text{he\text{strong}} me goes help
   ‘because he’s going to help me.’

properties:
1. the second subject element is always a strong pronoun, the first is always a clitic

(9) *omdad aai aai ma guid elpen.
   because \text{he\text{strong}} \text{he\text{strong}} me goes help
   INTENDED: ‘because he’s going to help me.’

(10) omda we waai le em guin elpen.
    because \text{we\text{weak}} \text{we\text{strong}} him goes help
    INTENDED: ‘because we’re going to help him.’

2. clitic doubling only occurs in embedded clauses (8) and inverted main clauses (11); it is disallowed in subject-initial main clauses (12)

(11) Guit n aai ma elpen?
    goes \text{he\text{clitic}} \text{he\text{strong}} me help
    ‘Is he going to help me?’

(12) *N guid aai ma elpen.
    \text{he\text{clitic}} goes \text{he\text{strong}} me help
    INTENDED: ‘He’s going to help me.’
2.2 Only subjects double

→ both clitic doubling and pronoun doubling only ever apply to subjects:

• objects cannot be pronoun doubled:

  (13) *Em em ik em gezien.
  him\textsubscript{strong} have I him\textsubscript{strong} seen
  INTENDED: ‘I saw him yesterday.’

  (14) *Em em em ik gezien.
  him\textsubscript{strong} have him\textsubscript{strong} I seen
  INTENDED: ‘I saw him yesterday.’

• objects cannot be clitic doubled:

  (15) *da k n gisteren em wou elpen.
  that I him\textsubscript{clitic} yesterday him\textsubscript{strong} wanted help
  INTENDED: ‘that I wanted to help him yesterday.’

• locative adverbs (whether used as arguments (16) or as adjuncts (17)) cannot be pronoun doubled:

  (16) *Dui em ek dui gewoent. 
  there have I there lived
  INTENDED: ‘I used to live there.’

  note: throughout this talk I’m abstracting away from the use of multiple locative modifiers with different scope, cf. Maienborn (2003).

  (17) In Rome I used to live on that side of the city, but here\textsubscript{1} I live here\textsubscript{2}.
  (here\textsubscript{1} = in New York; here\textsubscript{2} = on this side of the city)

  (18) *Dui ei Jef Marie dui gezien.
  there has Jef Marie there seen
  INTENDED: ‘Jef saw Marie there.’

  (19) *Dui ei dui Jef Marie gezien.
  there has there Jef Marie seen
  INTENDED: ‘Jef saw Marie there.’

• locative adverbs (whether used as arguments (20) or as adjuncts (21)) cannot be clitic doubled

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

  (21) *da ze er zaai dui Jef gezien eit.
  that she\textsubscript{clitic} there\textsubscript{clitic} she\textsubscript{strong} there\textsubscript{strong} Jef seen has
  INTENDED: ‘that she saw Jef there.’

  (22) *da ze er dui zaai Jef gezien eit.
  that she\textsubscript{clitic} there\textsubscript{clitic} she\textsubscript{strong} there\textsubscript{strong} Jef seen has
  INTENDED: ‘that she saw Jef there.’

⇒ the ability to undergo pronominal doubling is a clear test for subjecthood in this dialect

3 The new data

3.1 Pronominal doubling of expletives

→ in addition to the weak R-proform er ‘there’ (sometimes realized as t’r or d’r, henceforth glossed as Ėr), Wambeek Dutch can also use the strong R-proform dui ‘there’ as an expletive pronoun:

  (23) Dui stui ne vantj inn of.
  there stands a man in the garden
  ‘There’s a man in the garden.’

  (24) Stuit dui ne vantj inn of?
  stands there a man in the garden
  ‘Is there a man in the garden?’
(25) _omda dui ne vanti inn of stuit._

because there a man in the garden stands
‘because there is a man in the garden.’

**note:** the strong R-proform _dui_ ‘there’ clearly behaves like an expletive in these examples:

• it is compatible with conflicting locative expressions:

(26) _Dui stuid ie/genner ne vanti inn of._

there stands here/over.there a man in.the garden
‘There’s a man here/over there in the garden.’

• it imposes a definiteness restriction on the subject:

(27) _#Dui stiu Jef inn of._

there stands Jef in.the garden

• it can occur in purely existential sentences:

(28) _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.’

**doubling #1:** _dui_ can appear twice in the same clause → in the non-locative reading an example like (29) looks like pronoun doubling of an expletive:

(29) _Dui eit dui niemand me Jef geklapt._

there has there no-one with Jef talked
‘No-one spoke with Jef (there).’

**support** for an analysis in terms of pronoun doubling:

• doubled _dui_ can be combined with conflicting locative expressions:

(30) _Dui leit dui ie e vliegsken op men and._

there lies there here a flyDIM on my hand
‘There’s a fly here on my hand.’

• in embedded clauses and inverted main clauses (= contexts disallowing pronoun doubling, cf. [6][7]) _dui_-doubling obligatorily has a locative reading:

(31) _omda dui dui niemand me Jef geklapt eit._

because there there no-one with Jef talked has
‘because no-one spoke with Jef *(there).’

(32) _Eit dui dui niemand me Jef geklapt?_

has there there no-one with Jef talked
‘Did no-one speak with Jef *(there)?’

• when the second _dui_ is replaced by the deficient expletive pronoun, the locative reading becomes obligatory (compare with (34)):

(33) _Dui eit er niemand me Jef geklapt._

there has ER no-one with Jef talked
‘No-one spoke with Jef *(there).’

(34) _*Zaai ei ze ie niks te zieken._

shestrong has shedeficient here nothing to seek

**TENDED:** ‘She has no business being here.’

**doubling #2:** in embedded clauses (and inverted main clauses, not illustrated here), expletive _dui_ can co-occur with expletive _er_, in a configuration reminiscent of clitic doubling:

(35) _omdat er dui nen boek op tuifel leit._

because ER there a book on tafel lies
‘because there is a book (there) on the table.’
support for an analysis in terms of clitic doubling:

- this configuration is compatible with an additional, conflicting locative modifier:

  (36)  
  omdat er die nen boek op tuifel ligt.  
  because ER there here a book on tafel lies  
  'because there is a book here on the table.'

- this configuration imposes a definiteness restriction on the subject:

  (37)  
  *dat er die mensen boek op tuifel ligt.  
  that ER there my book on tafel lies  
  INTENDED: 'that my book is lying (there) on the table.'

3.2 Expletive-like use of here

**first impression**: the proximate R-proform ie ‘here’ cannot be used as an expletive:

(38)  
le stui ne vantj inn of.  
here stands a man in the garden  
'There's a man in the garden *(here).'

**support** for this position:

- ie is incompatible with purely existential sentences:

  (39)  
  #le 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.'

- ie necessarily imposes a locative reading (compare with (41)):

  (40)  
  le is niks gebeed.  
  here is nothing happened  
  'Nothing happened *(here).'

  (41)  
  Duì is niks gebeed.  
  there is nothing happened  
  'Nothing happened (there).'</n

- ie is incompatible with additional conflicting locative modifiers:

  (42)  
  #le 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.'

**however** ie can be doubled:

(43)  
le eit ie niemand me Jef geklappt.  
here has here no one with Jef talked  
'No-one spoke with Jef *(here).'

→ and when it is, it imposes a definiteness restriction on the subject (compare with (45)):

(44)  
*le eit ie Marie me Jef geklappt.  
here has here Marie with Jef talked  
INTENDED: 'Marie spoke with Jef here.'

(45)  
le eit Marie me Jef geklappt.  
here has Marie with Jef talked  
'Marie spoke with Jef here.'

**but** even when doubled, ie remains incompatible with conflicting locative expressions:

(46)  
#le eit ie genner niemand me Jef geklappt.  
here has here over there no one with Jef talked  
INTENDED: 'No-one spoke with Jef over there.'
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**note:** *ie* can also be doubled in inverted main clauses (and embedded clauses, not shown here):

(47) *Eit ie ie niemand me Jef geklapt?*  
has here here no-one with Jef talked  
'Did no-one speak with Jef *(here)?'

→ the Wambeek Dutch proximate R-proform *ie* 'here' displays mixed, expletive-like behavior:

• it can be doubled (= subjects/expletives)
• when doubled it imposes a definiteness restriction on the subject (= expletives)
• but it always retains its proximate meaning (≠ expletives)

4 The analysis

4.1 The internal structure of R-proforms

**proposal:** the R-proforms *er* ‘*er*’, *dui* ‘*there*’, and *ie* ‘*here*’ are in a structural subset-superset relation, with each form on the scale structurally and feature-wise more complex than the previous one:

(48)

```
/ \  
IE   DUI
  / \    
[+prox]  [+focus]
```

**note:** I am assuming a phrasal spell-out approach to pronouns ([Cardinaletti and Starke 1999; Déchaine and Wiltschko 2003; van Koppen 2003; Neeleman and Szendrő 2007; Barbiers et al. 2008; Starke 2009].

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re. the features used in (48):

1. feature the three forms have in common: [+deictic] (see also [Noonan 2017:214])
2. feature that distinguishes *ie/dui* from *er*: [+focus]  ➔ *ie/dui* can occur in clause-initial position >> *er* is marked there:

(49) *ie/Dui* is nichts gebeed.  
here/(there) is nothing happened  
'Nothing happened here/(there).'</n
(50) ?D'r is nichts gebeed.  
*ER* is nothing happened  
'Nothing happened.'

**compare:** weak object pronouns cannot be fronted, but focused ones can

(51) *M heb ik gezien.*  
him*weak* have I seen  
INTENDED: 'Him, I saw.'

(52) Hem heb ik gezien.  
him*focused* have I seen  
'Him, I saw.'

3. feature that distinguishes *ie* from *dui*/er: [+proximate]  ➔ *ie* necessarily has a proximate interpretation, the other two do not

(53) *ie* is nichts gebeed.  
here is nothing happened  
'Nothing happened *(here).*'

(54) *Dui* is nichts gebeed.  
there is nothing happened  
'Nothing happened *(there).*'
4.2 A [+deictic]-feature on T

**proposal:** T in (dialect) Dutch is endowed with a(n interpretable but unvalued) [+deictic]-feature (see Ritter and Wiltschko (2009), Klockmann et al. (2015)). This feature can be checked by an R-proform.

**supporting evidence for R-proform movement into specTP (from Klockmann et al. (2015)):** the Standard Dutch expletive pronoun *er* can be left out when followed by the locative adverbs *daar* 'there' or *hier* 'here' (see also Bennis (1986:214), Zwart (1992), Lipták (1998), Lightfoot (2002:95n4)).

\[(55)\]  
\[
\text{D'r is niks gebeed.} \\
\text{ER is nothing happened} \\
\text{‘Nothing happened.’}
\]

\[(56)\]  
\[
\text{Werd \((er)\) hier/daar gedanst?} \\
\text{became there here/there danced} \\
\text{‘Was there dancing here/there?’} \\
\text{(Standard Dutch)}
\]

- note that *er* cannot be left out willy-nilly (i.e. the EPP is operative in Dutch):

\[(57)\]  
\[
\text{Werd \((er)\) gedanst?} \\
\text{became there danced} \\
\text{‘Was there dancing?’} \\
\text{(Standard Dutch)}
\]

\[(58)\]  
\[
\text{Gedanst werd \((er)\).} \\
\text{danced became there} \\
\text{‘There was dancing.’} \\
\text{(Standard Dutch)}
\]

- and that the locative adverb has to be adjacent to the expletive:

\[(59)\]  
\[
\text{Werd \((er)\) wel gedanst daar?} \\
\text{became there PRT danced daar} \\
\text{‘Was there really dancing there?’} \\
\text{(Standard Dutch)}
\]

- and that temporal adverbs do not have the same effect:

\[(60)\]  
\[
\text{Werd *\((er)\) toen gedanst?} \\
\text{became there then danced} \\
\text{‘Was there dancing at that time?’} \\
\text{(Standard Dutch)}
\]

**importantly** unlike Ritter and Wiltschko (2009) and Klockmann et al. (2015) I do not assume the feature attracting the R-proform is [locative] or [+distal] \(\rightarrow\) prepositional (i.e. non-locative) R-proforms can also satisfy the EPP in Standard Dutch (61) and undergo doubling in the dialects (62):

\[(61)\]  
\[
\text{a. Werd daar wel over nagedacht?} \\
\text{became there PRT thought about} \\
\text{‘Did people really think about that?’}
\]

\[(62)\]  
\[
\text{b. *Werd \((er)\) wel nagedacht daarover?} \\
\text{became PRT thought \(\rightarrow\) there about INTENDED: ‘Did people really think about that?’}
\]

\[(63)\]  
\[
\text{c. Werd \((er)\) wel nagedacht daarover?} \\
\text{became there PRT thought there about} \\
\text{‘Did people really think about that?’}
\]

\[(64)\]  
\[
\text{le eíd ie niemand nie mee gewerkt in Frankrek.} \\
\text{here has here no one not with worked in France} \\
\text{‘No one worked with this in France.’}
\]

**analysis:** in an example like (63), T is endowed with a set of \(\phi\)-features, a [deictic]-feature, and an [EPP]-feature. The \(\phi\)-features are checked against the indefinite subject, while the R-proform *ie* ‘here’ checks [deictic], and moves into specTP, thus also checking [EPP]:

\[(65)\]  
\[
\text{dad ie niemand nie woent.} \\
\text{that here no one not lives} \\
\text{‘that no one lives here.’}
\]
4.3 Pronoun doubling of expletives

main proposal: pronoun doubling in Dutch dialects is a case of copy spell-out (van Craenenbroeck and van Koppen 2002): the subject moves from specTP into specCP. However, this movement is too local (Grohmann 2000, Abels 2003) and leads to the spell-out of both copies in the movement chain. Multiple spell-out is thus a Last Resort mechanism to meet two conflicting requirements: the ban on too-local movement and the [EPP]-feature on C.

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

(68)

**note:** the same structure also applies to the examples in (65) and (66), the only difference being that the R-proform in these examples is structurally smaller than in (64).

(65) dad dui niemand nie woentj. that there no.one not lives ‘that no one lives there.’

(66) dad d'r niemand nie woentj. that ER no.one not lives ‘that no one lives there.’
note: the same structure also applies to the example in (69), the only difference being that the R-proform in this example is structurally smaller than in (68)

(69) *Dui woendj dui niemand nie.*

there lives there no.one not

‘No one lives there.’

support for the analysis:

1. double spell-out is triggered by too-local movement ⇒ long-distance expletive doubling should be ruled out

(70) *ie paus ek dad (*ie) nen boek op tuifel leit.*

here think I that here a book on table lies

‘I think there’s a book on the table over here.’

2. pronoun doubling of expletives is feature-driven ⇒ doubling should not be semantically vacuous:

(71) A: *Uu zitnjt ie? B: Dui is niks gebeed.*

how sits.it here there is nothing happened

‘A: How are things here? B: Nothing happened.’

(72) A: *Uu zitnjt ie? B: *Dui is dui niks gebeed.*

how sits.it here there is there nothing happened


→ doubling cannot be used in out of the blue contexts, but instead is like verum focus in strongly emphasizing the polarity of the sentence in contradiction of an earlier statement (cf. also Craenenbroeck and Haegeman (2007) on West Flemish and Raposo and Uriagereka (2004) on the left-peripheral F-head in Romance)

note: in addition to identical pronoun doubling (cf. (67) and (69)), these dialects also allow for ‘mixed doubling’:

(73) *le woendj dui niemand nie.*

here lives there no.one not

‘No one lives here.’

(74) *Dui woendj ie niemand nie.*

there lives here no.one not

‘No one lives here.’

proposal: these cases involve partial spell-out of one of the copies (or scattered deletion, cf. Nunes (2004))
4.4 Clitic doubling of expletives

**Main proposal:** clitic doubling involves subextraction of a head from a structurally complex subject and adjunction of that head to C (van Craenenbroeck and van Koppen 2008), see also Uriagereka (1995), Laenzlinger (1998), Grohmann (2000), Belletti (2005), Kayne (2005), Poletto (2008).

(76) dat d’r ie niemand nie woentj.
that ER there no.one lives
‘that no one lives here’

(77) dat d’r ie niemand nie woentj.
that ER there no.one lives
‘that no one lives there’

(78) dat d’r ie niemand nie woentj.
that ER there no.one lives
‘that no one lives there’

(79) dat d’r ie niemand nie woentj.
that ER there no.one lives
‘that no one lives there’

5 Conclusion: two apparent interface asymmetries

- both pronominal doubling and expletives are *prima facie* interface asymmetries: the former involves multiple PF-manifestations of a single LF-entity, and the latter is a PF-reflex without corresponding LF-manifestation
- in the case of Dutch dialects both asymmetries are apparent
- doubling is a Last Resort solution to conflicting requirements: the ban on too-local movement vs. an [EPP]-feature on a [+Foc]-C
- deictic R-proforms (not just locative ones) can move into specTP to check a [deictic]-feature on T and satisfy the EPP
References


Klockmann, Heidi, Coppe van Urk, and Franca Wesseling. 2015. Agree is fallible, EPP is not: investigating EPP effects in Dutch. Handout of a talk at the Utrecht Syntax Interface Meetings.


