Complementizer Agreement in the Flemish Dialects

Gunther De Vogelaer   Annemie Neuckermans   Guido Vanden Wyngaerd

Universiteit Antwerpen   *Universiteit Gent*   *Koninklijke Universiteit Brussel*

1 ▪ INTRODUCTION

The topic of complementizer agreement has received a fair amount of attention in the dialectological literature (e.g. Van Ginneken 1938, Van Haeringen 1939, Vanacker 1949, Goeman 1979, Hoekstra & Smits 1997; see also the references in Goeman 1997). In this article we start out by considering the question to what extent verbal and complementizer agreement paradigms are similar. In doing so, we shall be testing the validity of the Inversion Generalisation proposed by Hoekstra & Smits (1997). A proper evaluation of this generalisation will require us to make a distinction between the phenomena of cliticisation of a weak pronoun onto a complementizer or finite verb on the one hand, and that of complementizer agreement on the other. As the difference between both phenomena is not always obvious, we shall look at the evidence in a rather detailed way, focusing in particular on complementizer agreement (and cliticisation) as it is found in the Belgian provinces of West- and East-Flanders. We shall also look at two other generalisations: the Identity Generalisation formulated by Hoekstra & Smits (1998), and the Monosyllable in Clitic Group Generalisation proposed by Goeman (2000). We argue that the concepts in terms of which these generalisations are formulated are too wide, and that the relevant concept is the narrower one of a verb with a CV-stem.

2 ▪ SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES BETWEEN VERBAL AND COMPLEMENTIZER AGREEMENT PARADIGMS

Since both the verb and the complementizer can show agreement, the question arises to what extent both agreement paradigms are similar. For a first idea, consider the following paradigm from the dialect of Lapscheure (West-Flanders) (Haegeman 1992):

			I-think	that	pronoun	tomorrow goes
sg.	1		Kpeinzen	da**n**-k	(ik)	morgen goa**n**.
	2		Kpeinzen	da-j	(gie)	morgen goa**t**.
	3		Kpeinzen	da-se	(zie)	morgen goa**t**.
pl.	1		Kpeinzen	da-me	(wunder)	morgen goa**n**.
	2		Kpeinzen	da-je	(gunder)	morgen goa**t**.
	3		Kpeinzen	da**n**-ze	(zunder)	morgen goa**n**.
sg.	3		Kpeinzen	da	Valère	morgen goa**t**.
pl.	3		Kpeinzen	da**n**	Valère en Pol morgen goa**n**.	

At first sight, the only thing the two paradigms have in common are the boldfaced items in the complementizer paradigm, i.e. the 1st sg. and 3rd pl. agreement-**n**. The agreement **t** on the verb in the 3rd sg. and in the 2nd person (sg. and pl.) is absent in the complementizer paradigm. A further difference is the extra morpheme on the complementizer (**k**, **j(e)**, **se**, **me** and **ze**), which is completely lacking in the verbal paradigm. In this article, we shall argue that, in spite of these apparently substantial differences, there is in fact a large degree of similarity between the verbal and complementizer agreement paradigms.

3 ▪ THE INVERSION GENERALISATION

The question to what extent verbal and complementizer agreement paradigms are similar has been addressed in Hoekstra & Smits (1997). On the basis of the literature available they formulate the Inversion Generalisation.

(2) *The Inversion Generalisation*
 If the complementizer shows agreement morphology, it is identical to the agreement morphology found on the verb when it occurs in inversion

It is well-known that verbal agreement morphology in inversion can be different from that in non-inversion contexts (e.g. Standard Dutch *jij denk-t* 'you think' vs *denk jij* 'think you'). The phenomenon is not restricted to 2 sg. (e.g. *wy speul-t* 'we play' vs *speul-e wy* 'play we' in eastern dialects; Van Haeringen 1958). For a proper evaluation of the Inversion Generalisation, we therefore need to look at inversion paradigms. Haegeman (1992) quotes the paradigms in (3) for Lapscheure, and Magda Devos (p.c.) provides the data in (4) for the nearby dialect of Klemskerke:

(3)   *Lapscheure*   *no inversion*   *inversion*   *pronoun*

			no inversion	inversion	pronoun
sg.	1		ik goa**n**	goa**n**-k	(ik)
	2		gie goat	goa-j	(gie)
	3		zie goat	goa-se	(zie)
pl.	1		wunder goa**n**	goa-me	(wunder)
	2		gunder goat	goa-j	(gunder)
	3		zunder goa**n**	goa**n**-ze	(zunder)
sg.	3		Valère goat	goa	Valère
pl.	3		Valère en Pol goa**n**	goa**n**	Valère en Pol

(4)   *Klemskerke*   *that*   *verb in inversion*

		that	verb in inversion	
sg.	1	da-k	goo-k	
	2	da-j(e)	go-j(e)	
	3 m.	dat-n	goot-n	
	f.	da-se	goo-se	
	n.	da-t	goo-t	
pl.	1	da-me	goo-me	
	2	da	go	(junder)
	3	dã-ze	gõ-ze	
		da-se		

These paradigms confirm the inversion generalisation in a striking way. The verbal inversion paradigm in (3) exactly matches the complementizer paradigm in (1). Both the complementizer and the verbal inversion paradigm lack the **t**-morpheme of the 3rd sg. and of the 2nd person (sg. and pl.). The Klemskerke paradigms in (4) likewise confirm the correctness of the Inversion Generalisation. They differ from the Lapscheure data in that the 1 sg. agreement nasal consonant is lacking both on the verb and on the complementizer, as well as in the occurrence of a nasal vowel in 3 pl.

As far as the morphemes **k**, **j(e)**, **se**, **me** and **ze** are concerned, we observe that these appear identically on the verb in inversion and on the complementizer. This could be taken to indicate that these morphemes should be analysed as agreement morphemes. The complementizer would then agree with the subject not only in person and number, but also in gender; agreement would furthermore be sensitive

to the difference between a pronominal and a non-pronominal subject. At the same time, the possibility cannot be ruled out that **k**, **j(e)**, **se**, **me** and **ze** are clitic pronouns, and consequently are not part of the agreement morphology. A first reason for adopting such an analysis has already been hinted at: an agreement analysis would presuppose that agreement is sensitive for the difference between pronominal and nonpronominal subjects, as (most of) these dialects only allow pronominal subjects to follow the morphemes under investigation (eg *goase zie/*Marie*). It is highly uncommon for agreement to be sensitive in this way. Another argument supporting the clitic pronoun hypothesis is that it allows one to establish a fairly far-reaching similarity between inversion and non-inversion paradigms. By contrast, if **k**, **j(e)**, **se**, **me** and **ze** are taken to be agreement morphemes, this would imply a rather large discrepancy between the inversion and the non-inversion paradigms. The latter shows only two agreement morphemes (**n** and **t**), whereas the inversion paradigm would have up to nine different agreement morphemes. And although not all discrepancies between inversion and non-inversion paradigms can be eliminated, it is obvious that we would like those paradigms to differ as little as possible.

A third argument to assume that the inversion paradigms contain clitic pronouns is to be found in the fact that in non-inversion contexts a weak form of the pronoun can precede the verb, which is, in almost all cases, identical to the morpheme found in inversion contexts. This is shown by the following data from the Poperinge dialect (Vallaeys 1997):

(5)	*Poperinge*		*no inversion*	*inversion*
sg.		1	**k** xon ek	goŋ-**k** ek
		2	**je** got xiej	go-**je** giej
		3 m.	æ got iej	got-n iej
		f.	**ze** got siej	go-**se** ziej
pl.		1	**me** gon wieder	go-**me** wieder
		2	**je** got xieder	go-**je** gieder
		3	**ze** gon zieder	gõ-**ze** zieder

Moreover, the weak pronouns which precede the verb cannot co-occur with weak pronouns following it. These facts strongly suggest that both are one and the same

thing, viz. weak or clitic pronouns, which may occur in different positions. Such positional freedom is typical of pronouns, not of agreement morphemes.

The weak pronouns preceding the verb are not fully identical to those following it. A case in point is 3 sg. m., where the pronoun consists of only a vowel in front of the verb (*æ* 'he'), and only a nasal consonant (*-n*) in inversion. We assume with Vanacker (1949:77) that the **n** is the original accusative form of the personal pronoun *hij* 'he'. The appearance of accusative forms of pronouns in inversion contexts is a widely attested phenomenon, which is even mentioned in the grammar of Standard Dutch (Haeseryn et. al. 1997:251). As far as the non-inversion context is concerned, the possibility cannot be excluded that we are dealing with the nominative pronoun in 3 sg. m. Observe, however, that the nasal consonant that is found in inversion contexts can also appear in non-inversion contexts when the verb begins with a vowel. e.g. Poperinge *æn est* 'he is', *an æt* 'he has' (Vallaeys 1997), so that we could be dealing with an accusative pronoun here as well. We shall leave this issue unresolved here, however. The situation found in the Poperinge dialect is not unique: in most dialects, a number of formal differences arises between the possible weak pronouns before and after the verb, but most of these formal differences can be explained as a result of assimilation processes.[1]

A second difference between the inverted and the non-inverted paradigm concerns the **t** of the 2nd person and the 3rd person sg. Haegeman (1992:49) suggests a phonetic explanation for the disappearance of this **t** in the inversion paradigm: "in [the inversion column in (3)…] the –**t** ending of the second persons singular and plural and of the third person singular is assimilated to the following consonant". Haegeman does not formulate the phonetic processes responsible for the disappearance of **t**, or discuss the system governing it (see, however, Haegeman 1998 for a discussion of **t**-deletion in extraposition contexts), but we may turn to another source. De Visser & Goeman (1979) discuss the deletion of final **t** in the

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[1] A reviewer points out that there exist some irreducible differences between pre- and postverbal weak pronouns, eg Wambeek has *guit-n* 'goes he' but the preverbal form is never followed by a nasal consonant, eg *ij guit* 'he goes', *ij(*n) es* 'he is'. Similarly in 1 pl., where Wambeek has *loepe me/we* 'run we' vs *we/*me loepe* 'we run'. The latter case, however, could be explained in terms of assimilation, the labio-velar [w] of the weak pronoun triggering a bilabial nasal [m] on the agreement affix before deleting. Obviously, such assimilation cannot occur if the pronoun precedes the verb. In any event, although we acknowledge the existence of discrepancies between weak pronouns preceding and following the verb, it is clear that such discrepancies constitute the exception rather than the norm.

dialects of Zeeuws-Vlaanderen, stating that final **t** is only pronounced before a pause or sentence-finally. It does not seem unreasonable to assume that this rule might also hold for the dialects discussed here, which belong to the same dialect area. This would imply that final **t** also disappears in the non-inversion paradigm provided further material follows. Haegeman (p.c.) reports that this is indeed the case, e.g. *Valère goa [f]roeg naar huis vandaag* 'V goes early to home today',. There is more to be said about this process of deletion of **t**, given that it does not delete in 3 sg. m., e.g. *got-n* 'goes he' (see (4) and (5) above). Also, the Poperinge data from Vallaeys suggest a situation that deviates from the situation sketched for Zeeuws-Vlaanderen by De Visser & Goeman, as **t** deletes preceding an incorporated clitic (e.g. *go-se ziej* 'goes she) but not when it precedes a full pronoun (*ze got siej* 'she goes she'; Haegeman, p.c., reports that the latter form is unacceptable in her dialect). It therefore appears that **t**-deletion in Poperinge is more restricted than in the more easterly dialects of Lapscheure, Klemskerke, and the Zeeland area. This is confirmed by the fact that **t**-deletion remains absent in the West of West-Flanders in contexts where it invariably occurs in the East (Magda Devos, p.c.; examples include *dat [s]a(l)/komt/betekent/[f]raag/[x]a* 'that will / comes / means / ask / goes').

That phonetic deletion of **t** in the third person does take place is supported by certain voicing assimilation phenomena. This appears from the Poperinge paradigm in (5), where in the case of 3 sg. f. the pronoun has a voiced fricative in the onset in non-inversion (*ze* 'she'), but a voiceless one in inversion contexts (*go-se* 'goes she'). This alternation is also found with non-pronominal subjects: thus the underlying voiced **v** of *Valère* in fact appears as devoiced **f** as a result of voicing assimilation with an underlying **t** agreement morpheme (i.e. *goa [f]alère* 'goes V'). This phenomenon is also found in certain Brabant dialects, where function words like *dat* 'that', *met* 'with', and *niet* 'not' can be pronounced without final **t**, while at the same time this underlying **t** gives rise to devoicing of a following fricative (Goyvaerts 1980). Whether such a rule of phonetic reduction can be invoked for the 2nd person as well is a moot question, that we shall leave unresolved here (De Schutter 1997:32 appears to answer the question in the positive). Observe that this case might actually be a different one than that of 3 sg. **t**. For one thing, the phonological environments are quite different, so that it does not seem easy to generalise over both cases. For another, the case of **t**-deletion in 2 sg., unlike that of 3 sg., is also found in standard Dutch.

By assuming on the one hand that **k**, **j(e)**, **se**, **me** and **ze** are clitic pronouns, and on the other hand that there is an underlying **t** in the third person sg., we have achieved a near-complete identity between the paradigms with and without inversion, which appeared to be quite different at first sight. On top of that, we have ample evidence to conclude that the Inversion Generalisation is correct.

4 ▪ THE NATURE OF COMPLEMENTIZER AGREEMENT: PERSON OF NUMBER, OR BOTH?

4.1 ▪ *Introduction*

Vanacker (1949), in his article entitled 'Over enkele meervoudsvormen van voegwoorden' [on some plural forms of complementizers] takes the nasal consonant on the complementizer to be a morpheme indicating plural number. Hoekstra & Smits (1997:9) likewise consider the complementizer agreement as it occurs in Flanders and Zeeland to be a case of number agreement. The use of the term 'number agreement' is probably inspired by the verbal agreement paradigm such as it is found in Standard Dutch, where the **–en** morpheme does indeed mark plural agreement. In the dialects, there also exist a number of minimal pairs, such as West and East Flemish *da-ze* 'that she' *vs. dan-ze* 'that they', or Zeeland *toen-ik* 'when I' vs *toene-me* 'when we'. In Vanacker's perspective, the inflection on the complementizer is likewise an indication of plural number. In the two sections to follow, we shall argue that on closer inspection, this analysis is mistaken: on the one hand, the Flemish plural-**n** is not used exclusively for plural forms, whereas on the other hand, plural-**n** is unattested for second person plural (section 4.2). This analysis is further confirmed by a look at the **t**-morpheme that is found elsewhere in the paradigm (section 4.3).

4.2 ▪ *The n-forms in the complementizer paradigm*

Vanacker (1949) considers the **n** in Flemish forms as *dan-ze* 'that they' (3 pl.) to be a plural-**n**. Nevertheless, a nasal consonant is rife in the first person singular in these dialects as well. This **n** appears in complementizer-clitic sequences like *daNk* 'that I' (see (1)) and *danek* 'that I', as well as in forms like *anek* 'if I'. Since Vanacker does not consider these occurrences of **n** to be agreement morphemes, he explains them on phonetic grounds: 'voor *daNk* kunnen we aannemen dat de spieren niet dadelijk voldoende gespannen zijn om de **k** te articuleren, waardoor de ongespannen

velaire explosief **N** tussen de vocaal en de gespannen velaire explosief **k** ontstond'
[for *daNk* 'that I' we may assume that the muscles are not sufficiently tense for the
articulation of **k** right away, which gave rise to the lax velar plosive **N** between the
vowel and the tense velar plosive **k**] (1949:41). The **n** in *danek* 'that I' cannot be so
explained, however. Vanacker therefore assumes this form to either reduce to an
earlier *da_k* 'that I', or, alternatively, to the existence of an 'anorganic' liaison
consonant between the vowels **a** and **e** (1949:42).

This analysis of Vanacker's has already been called into question by De Visser &
Goeman (1979) (see also De Schutter 1997:32). We believe that Vanacker's analysis
is indeed doubtful. A number of arguments support the idea that the first person
singular **n** is an agreement morpheme. For one thing, as already noted, Vanacker's
account does not really work well for the forms *danek* 'that I' and *anek* 'if I'.
Vanacker's phonetic explanations in terms of the concept of 'ease of articulation'
also strikes us as being ad hoc. He does not adduce any independent evidence
suggesting that the insertion of such liaison consonants is in fact a more
widespread phenomenon, and we are not aware of any such evidence either.[2]
Furthermore, if phonetic motivations for such consonants are admissible in the
case of the first person, it is unclear why they could not also be adduced to explain
the plural forms (eg *danze* 'that they').

For another, the Inversion Generalisation confirms the analysis of **n** as an
agreement morpheme, as the verbal paradigm also has **n** in the first person. If
indeed it is true that complementizers agree like verbs, we expect there to be a
large measure of similarity between both paradigms. In this connection, it is worth
pointing out that a binary opposition in agreement paradigms between, on the one
hand, 1 sg., 1 pl. and 3 pl., and, on the other hand, 2 sg., 2 pl. and 3 sg., as it is
found in the dialects discussed above, perfectly agrees with Postma's (1993)
circular topology of morphological agreement paradigms (in particular, his (19A)).
In particular, the existence of analogical pressure between 1 sg. and 1 pl. is
perfectly in line with Postma's theory.[3] Furthermore, it is also fairly common cross-

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[2] J. Taeldeman suggests the case of *pampier*, which is apparently an alternative articulation of the
Standard Dutch word *papier* 'paper'. As far as we are aware, this is an isolated case, however. Al-
ternative pronunciations such as *bankboter* for *bakboter* 'margarine' are notoriously absent.
[3] Another clear case of illustrating the parallelism between 1 sg., 1 pl. and 3 pl. involves the para-
digm of the irregular verb *zijn* 'to be' in the Brabant dialects: *ik zijn, gij zij(t), hij is, wij zijn, gijle*

linguistically (Cysouw 2001:186). If indeed first person sg. **n** is an agreement morpheme, as we claim, it cannot be the case that this morpheme expresses (plural) number. Rather, it must be seen as a portmanteau morpheme expressing both person and number.

A further argument for treating **n** as a portmanteau morpheme expressing both person and number resides in the fact that it never appears in the 2ⁿᵈ person plural. If the nasal consonant were an indication of number, as Vanacker would have it, we would expect to find it in all persons of the plural, which, however, is not the case. For the sake of completeness, we may add that we agree with Vanacker (1949) that the form of the clitic pronoun **me** in 1 pl. prevents us from seeing whether agreement takes place or not. We nevertheless assume it to be present but invisible, due to the phonetic processes of nasal assimilation and degemination. This is confirmed by the fact that forms with labio-velar [w] like *danwe* 'that we' are also sporadically attested in the provinces of West and East Flanders.

As a final point in this section, we would like to point out that not all Flemish dialects display this first person singular **n**. It is not found, for example, in the West of East Flanders. However, as the Inversion Generalisation predicts, the absence of a first person singular **n** in the verbal paradigm seems to correlate with the absence of **n** on the 1 sg. complementizer. Also, it should be noted that different verb classes may show different agreement paradigms in a large number of dialects. De Visser & Goeman (1979) already point out that in comparing complementizer agreement patterns to the verbal paradigm, one should pay special attention to the category of monosyllabic irregular verbs. We shall return to this issue more extensively below.

4.3 ▪ The t-forms of the 2ⁿᵈ person and the 3ʳᵈ person sg.
Let us now shift our attention from the nasal agreement consonant to the plosive **t** that is found in 3 sg. and in the 2ⁿᵈ person, both sg. and pl.[4] Is it possible to find a trace of this agreement morpheme in the complementizer paradigm? As it turns

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zij(t), zijle zijn. Latin and, presumably, Proto-Indo-European, also show a distribution of the **m** morpheme that involves 1 sg. and 1 pl. (eg Latin subjunctive *vincam, vincas, vincat, vincamus, vincatis, vincant*). The paradigm of Latin *esse* furthermore has forms with initial **s** in 1 sg., 1 pl. and 3 pl. (***s**um, es, est, **s**umus, estis, **s**unt*).
[4] Whether there is actually an underlying **t** agreement morpheme in the 2 sg. inversion paradigm is an open question.

out, an unambiguous instance of an agreement-**t** is hard to come by. This relates to a number of factors. If the complementizer is *dat* 'that', which itself ends in **t**, the presence of an agreement-**t** attached to it will not easily strike the eye. With *als* 'if', on the other hand, chances of finding an agreement **t** might at first sight appear to be better. Yet here as well a number of processes are at work that may blur the picture. Some of these factors have already been discussed above, when we discussed the paradigms in (3) and (4), finding that an underlying **t** often disappears as a result of phonetic reduction, so that its presence can only be observed indirectly. This was notably the case for a form like *goase* 'goes she' (Lapscheure), which we have argued reduces to *goat ze* 'goes she'. Consider now the paradigm for *als/of* 'if / whether' for Klemskerke, to which we add, for completeness' sake, the paradigms of *dat* 'that' and *gaan* 'go':

(6)	*Klemskerke*		*dat*	*gaan*	*als/of*
sg.		1	da-k	goo-k	o-k
		2	da-j(e)	go-j(e)	o-j(e)
		3 m.	dat-n	goot-n	ot-n
		f.	da-se	goo-se	o-se
		n.	da-t	goo-t	o-t
pl.		1	da-me	goo-me	o-me
		2	da	go (junder)	o (junder)
		3	da-se	gõ-ze	o-se
			dã-ze		õ-ze

Again, the three paradigms are strikingly similar (excepting the optionality of the nasal vowel in the complementizer paradigms in 3 pl.). There is also a certain amount of **t**-deletion in the *if*-paradigm, notably in those contexts where **t** is missing in the other paradigms as well (i.e. 3 sg. f. and the 2nd person), but at least in 3 sg. f. the presence of underlying **t** can be observed indirectly through voicing assimilation. Arguably, in 3 sg. n. **t** has disappeared as a result of degemination. In contrast, the 3 sg. m. provides direct evidence for the presence of an agreement-**t**: all three paradigms have this **t** (*dat-n, goot-n,* and *ot-n*). In the latter two cases in particular, this **t** cannot be a consonant belonging to the stem, so that it must be an inflectional morpheme. This is, then, the only case where an agreement-**t** can be directly observed. We find this agreement-**t** not only in West-Flanders, but also in

other parts of the Flemish complementizer agreement area (e.g. *a(s)tij* 'if he' in various places in East-Flanders, at least as far east as Sint-Niklaas).[5]

Summarising, we have tried to tease apart the phenomena of cliticisation of pronouns onto complementizers and finite verbs on the one hand, and that of complementizer agreement on the other. While it is obvious that not everything that looks like complementizer agreement at first glance actually is (a point made by Van Marle 2000), it appears to us that it is equally uncontroversial that certain morphological phenomena are best described in those terms.

5 ▪ A TRANSITIONAL AREA: THE WAASLAND

In this section, we would like to subject both our findings and the Inversion Generalisation to thorough testing. For that purpose, we take a closer look at the transitional area between the Flemish and Brabant dialects. The dialect of Nieuwkerken-Waas presents the following picture (a subject clitic is added to each paradigm):

(7)	*Nieuwkerken-Waas*	*complementizer*	*verb in inversion*	
			'go'	*'sit'*
sg.	1	da-k	go-k	zit-ek
		dan-ek	gon-ek	*zit(e)n-ek
	2	da-de (da-xe)	go-de	zit-e
	3 m.	dat-e	got-e	zit-e
	f.	da-se	go-se	zit-se
	n.	dan-t	gon-t	zit-e(n)t
pl.	1	da-me	go-me	zite-me
	2	da-de (da-xe)[6]	go-de	zit-e
	3	da-se, dan-ze	gon-ze	zite-ze

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[5] Van Marle (2000) discusses Substandard Dutch forms such as *astie* 'if he', arguing that these may have nothing to do with complementizer agreement, the *-tie* being an allomorph of the clitic pronoun *ie* 'he'. Van Marle does not present any criteria, however, which may allow one to decide for any particular case if we are dealing with complementizer agreement or pronoun allomorphy.
[6] The form *daxe* in the second person is probably a Brabantism. Thus it is rare in combination with subject doubling: ??*daxe gij* vs *dade gij*.

A first issue that we want to discuss in connection with these paradigms is that of the occurrence of a nasal consonant in 3 sg. n. *dant* 'that it' and *gont* 'goes it'. This consonant turns out to be a bit of a mystery, and we shall be unable to fully account for it. Some observations on its nature can be made, however.

It is unlikely that this nasal consonant is an agreement morpheme, for a number of reasons. First, treating the nasal as an agreement morpheme would make the dialects that have it stand out typologically, in so far as neither of the neighbouring dialect families (i.e. the Flemish and Brabant dialect groups) have it. It would furthermore imply that the agreement system would be sensitive to gender distinctions, which is again a typologically unexpected property within the Germanic family. More importantly, the nasal consonant also appears in contexts where the subject has different agreement features. The generalisation seems to be that it occurs preceding a 3 sg. n. clitic, whether the latter functions as subject or as object. Some more evidence from Vanacker from the same area illustrating this is reproduced in (8):

(8)   *Sint-Niklaas*
   a.   zoude   ni   zeggen   dantaa   amoel wit.
        would-you   not   say   that-it-he   all   knows
        'Wouldn't you say that he knows it all?
   b.   dasekers   dataa   da   gezeideet.
        that-is-certain   that-he   that   said   has
        'It's certain that he said that.'
   c.   ze   zeggen   dat   er   aa   van   onder getrokken   is.
        they say   that   there he   of   under drawn   is
        'They say that he has absconded.'

We are very likely not dealing with an agreement-**n** here, as all sentences of (8) have a 3 sg. m. subject, yet the nasal only appears in (8a). For these reasons, and for want of a better term, we shall call this **n** an epenthetic nasal consonant. The neuter clitic *'t* 'it' apparently readily lends itself to the insertion of a preceding nasal consonant. This further transpires from the following data (taken from Vanacker 1949), which all feature a 3 sg. n. object clitic:

(9)   *Lokeren*   3 pl.   dã**nz**e**nt**, dãnzet   'that they it'

		3 sg. f.	dasent		'that she it'

(10) *Wetteren*   veur dãⁿzeⁿt   kostn dyᵉpen

              beforethat-they-it   could baptise

    .   'before they could baptise it'

(11) *Aalst*   3 sg. m.   aa   koestent   zekes   goed

                            he   could-it   certainly   well

                            'He must have been able to do it well.'

            3 sg. m.   am   wistent   ni

                            He   knew-it   not

                            'He didn't know it.'

The 3 pl. form *dãnzent* in Lokeren and Wetteren is particularly instructive: the first nasal consonant is an agreement morpheme, so that the second must be seen as an epenthetic nasal. The examples in (11) furthermore show that this nasal is also attested in the verbal paradigm.

Vanacker (1949:81) suggests a phonetic source for this epenthetic nasal: 'we menen dat de **n** voor de **t** in *dant = dat het* ook hier fonetisch te verklaren is door een onvoldoende afsluiting der neusholte bij de uitspraak der **t**' [we assume that the **n** preceding **t** in *dant = dat het* 'that it' is to be explained in phonetic terms through insufficient closure of the nasal cavity in the articulation of **t**]. Although we believe a purely articulatory account of this epenthetic nasal is ultimately unsatisfactory, its nonagreement character should lead us to have an open mind about possible explanations for its occurrence. As noted by De Schutter (1997:35), the reason for its insertion cannot be explained in purely phonetic terms, as it does not appear in contexts that are phonetically identical, but that involve the definite article *het* 'it' instead of the homophonous clitic pronoun.

(12)   a.   dant   goed   is

             that-it good   is

             'that it is good'

    b.   da(*n)'t   meiske   komt

             that-the   girl   comes

             'that the girl comes'

On the other hand, not all dialects appear to behave identically in this respect. Thus some dialects that have the epenthetic nasal in (12a) also allow it in (12b) (e.g. Nieuwkerken-Waas). On the other hand, these dialects do not have it in phonetically similar contexts not involving *het* 'it/the' (e.g. *da(*n)Tongeren in Limburg ligt* 'that Tongeren lies in Limburg' vs. *dan-t-orgel in de kerk staat* 'that the organ stands in the church'). Even in these dialects, then, there are structural factors involved in the distribution of the epenthetic nasal consonant. At this point, we must leave further analysis of the epenthetic nasal as a topic for future research.

Returning to (7), we now address its status with respect to the Inversion Generalisation. We find that the 1 sg. nasal is optional in both the complementizer and the verbal paradigm. This could be taken to show that we are dealing with a transitional area. On the other hand, the 1st sg. **n** does not enjoy universal distribution in the West of the Flanders dialect area either, as transpires from the Klemskerke paradigm in (4) above.

Another matter is the absence of **n** from some verbs, witness the impossibility of **zit(e)n-ek* 'sit I' vs *gonek* 'go I'; the 3 pl. likewise has no **n** with *zitten* 'to sit', but it does with *gaan* 'to go'. It is hard to tell whether this difference reflects a difference in agreement paradigms between different verb classes, or whether it results from a phonetic rule deleting or inserting **n**. Insertion of **n** between adjacent vowel sounds is a phenomenon observed elsewhere in Dutch, eg *Hilde-n-is naar de markt* 'Hilde has gone to the market'. However, in Standard Dutch this insertion only occurs after unstressed vowels. That different verb classes may have different agreement morphemes is suggested by the fact that in the neighbouring Brabant dialects the verb form for 1 sg. is different for the strong verb like *gaan* 'to go' and the weak *werken* 'to work': *ik gaan terug/gaan ik terug?* 'I go back/Go I back?' vs *Ik werk(*en)/werk(*en) ik?* 'I work/Work I?'. An analysis of the **n** in Brabant as a phonetically inserted liaison vowel is unlikely, as it never occurs if the verb is past tense (eg *dee(*ne)k* 'did I', *zei(*ne)k* 'said I'); see Postma (1994) for a similar pattern in Amsterdam Dutch. Apart from the fact that verbs like *gaan* 'to go' and *werken* 'to work' differ on the strong/weak dimension, however, they also differ in the phonological structure of the stem (CV vs CV(C)C). That the latter fact is also relevant is shown by the case of *zitten* in (7), which is strong (like *gaan*), but has a CV(C)C stem (like *werken*), and behaves like the latter with respect to the agreement-**n** in 1 sg. In order to fully tease the relevant factors apart, we would

need to consider a weak verb with a CV stem, but the class of verbs with a CV stem is extremely restricted, and all its members are strong.[7] This suggests that the properties of having a CV stem and that of being a strong verb are related, although only in one direction: if a verb has a CV stem it is strong, but if it is strong its stem is not necessarily CV (as the case of *zitten* 'to sit' shows: strong but no CV stem). We shall therefore call the class of verbs that display an agreement-**n** in the first person CV-verbs. Turning to the Inversion Generalisation, it is clear that it only holds when the complementizer paradigm is compared with the CV-verb paradigm. Observations to this effect have been made before, but in different terms. Thus Hoekstra & Smits (1998) suggest that for the purposes of the Inversion Generalisation, only the verbal paradigms of auxiliaries are relevant (see (13) below). Although they do not provide a definition of the class of auxiliaries, for the Waasland dialects at least this characterisation is inaccurate, as many uncontroversial auxiliary verbs having CVC stems feature no agreement-**n** in 1 sg. (eg *willek* 'want I', *zallek* 'shall I', *moetek* 'must I', *maggek* 'may I' etc.).[8] Similarly, Goeman (2000:283) suggests that the relevant class is that of monosyllabic verbs (his Monosyllable in Clitic Group Generalisation or MCGG). Again, we believe that actually only a subset of those is relevant, viz. those with a CV stem, for reasons already discussed. The reason for the privileged status of CV-stems may reside in phonological properties of the syllable. Thus nasal consonants cannot follow obstruents at the end of the syllable because they are more sonorous than obstruents; as a result, nasal agreement morphemes will be ruled out with CVC-stems (unless **n** is syllabic). By contrast, coronal obstruents are known to behave exceptionally with respect to syllable structure, in particular with respect to the sonority curve: thus they may follow stops at the right syllable boundary (eg Vpt, Vps, Vkt, etc.). As a result, agreement-**t** attaches to CV(C)C-stems without any problem.

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[7] Other verbs with a CV stem include *staan* 'to stand', *zien* 'to see', *doen* 'to do', and, in Standard Dutch, *slaan* 'to hit' (*slagen* in most southern dialects). All these verbs are strong. In many dialects, *hebben* 'to have' might also be a candidate, the final bilabial consonant being absent and the vowel long.

[8] Hoekstra & Smits (1998) discuss evidence from the Limburg dialects, where the complementizer shows an agreement **t** in 2 pl. This agreement **t** is found with all verb classes in the present, but only with a limited set in the past tense (e.g. *waor-t ger* 'were you' vs **woende-t ger* 'lived you'). Although clearly the agreement-**t** attaches to a CVC-stem, this morpheme will undoubtedly also show

The Inversion Generalisation given in (1) above does not embody a claim about the geographical distribution of the phenomenon of complementizer agreement. A number of other generalisations discussed by Hoekstra and Smits, however, do make predictions concerning geographical distribution. We shall briefly discuss the Identity Generalisation here, which appears in Hoekstra & Smits (1998):

(13)   The Identity Generalisation
        Complementizer agreement only occurs when the agreement ending of the
        inverted auxiliary in the present tense is identical to the agreement ending
        of the inverted auxiliary in the preterite

Although a full discussion of this generalisation would lead us too far afield here, it is interesting to note that the transition between the Waasland and Brabant dialects provides evidence in support of the correctness of (13) (aside from the concept of 'auxiliary', which we have argued should be replaced by 'CV-verb'). The verbal paradigm for the present tense is in many respects identical for the Waasland and most Brabant dialects, both having an agreement-**n** in 1 sg. of verbs with a CV-stem. The Brabant dialects, however, do not have complementizer agreement. If the Identity Generalisation is correct, there should be a difference in agreement paradigms in the past tense between these dialects. This does indeed turn out to be the case. An agreement-**n** is present in the past tense in Nieuwkerken-Waas in the 1 sg.: regular verbs feature the suffix -*te(ge)n* in 1 sg., and verbs having a CV-stem in the past tense can likewise reveal this nasal consonant, e.g. *'k zun* 'I would', *'k deen* 'I did', *'k won* 'I wanted' (next to *'k wilde(ge)n* 'I wanted'), *'k zeen* 'I said'.[9] The Brabant CV-verbs, on the other hand, do not display an agreement-**n** in the past tense 1 sg. Summarising, the Waasland and Brabant data appear to indicate that the identity of present and past tense agreement paradigms is a necessary condition for complementizer agreement to take place. Whether it is also a sufficient condition, is a question that we shall leave unaddressed here.

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up with CV-stems, so that a consideration of this class will give the correct results for this dialect group as well.
[9] Just as in the present tense complementizer paradigm, agreement in the 1st person sg. is optional in the past tense verbal paradigm. These facts actually support the intimate connection between verb and complementizer agreement in general, and the Identity Generalisation in particular: suppose that

We have tested the Inversion Generalisation (Hoekstra & Smits 1997) against the data from West- and East-Flemish dialects and found it to be valid. We have furthermore argued that there is a large degree of similarity between inversion paradigms and non-inversion paradigms, despite great apparent differences. Following De Visser & Goeman (1979) we have assumed that the nasal in 1 sg. is an agreement morpheme. We have discussed the problem of the mysterious epenthetic nasal consonant that is found preceding a 3rd sg. n. clitic. We have looked for an agreement-**t** in the complementizer paradigm, and have managed to find one. As far as the nature of complementizer agreement is concerned, we have shown that the Flemish data do not provide any evidence for a phenomenon such as number agreement, but that complementizers agree with combinations of person and number, just like verbs. The case of the transitional area of the Waasland has revealed once again (see Hoekstra & Smits 1998; Goeman 2000) that, for a proper evaluation of the correctness of the inversion generalisation one must not confine one's attention to the present tense of regular verbs. Rather, the CV-verbs turn out to be the relevant class that should be taken into account for an evaluation of the Inversion Generalisation. Finally, a comparison between data from the Waasland and neighbouring Brabant dialect area has revealed some evidence supporting the Identity Generalisation proposed by Hoekstra and Smits (1998).

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1 sg. agreement-**n** in the past tense were on the way out in this dialect, due to influence from Brabant. We would then expect complementizer agreement in 1 sg. to disappear with it.

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