

Two periphrastic future constructions competing in contemporary Standard Dutch

Just like other Germanic languages contemporary Standard Dutch offers several possibilities of expressing future meaning. Besides the frequently used present future, there are two periphrastic future constructions: *zullen* + infinitive - with a modal origin - and *gaan* + infinitive, which emerged from an adative motion verb. The older *zullen* + infinitive is continually attested since the Old Dutch period. However, *gaan* + infinitive arose at the earliest in Middle Dutch, probably without being widespread before the 20th century (De Rooij 1985/1986).

The relationship between the movement future with *gaan* and the modal future with *zullen* in contemporary spoken Dutch was investigated by Fehringer (2017). She found that *gaan* as a future marker mainly expresses proximate future and preferably appears with animate, first-person subjects in subordinate clauses. Meanwhile, *zullen* + infinitive occurs primarily in main clauses, often accompanied by modal particles. Moreover, in Belgian Dutch, especially in the West-Flemish varieties, the movement future with *gaan* is combined with a wider range of verbs than in Netherlandic Dutch and thus seems to be at a more advanced stage of grammaticalization than in the Netherlands. For example, *gaan* can be combined with *hebben* '(to) have', *zijn* '(to) be' and even with lexical *gaan* '(to) go', all of which are very uncommon in Netherlandic Dutch (cf. Coleman 2000, Decroos 2000, Fehringer 2017).

In my talk I will firstly discuss the relationship between *zullen* + infinitive and *gaan* + infinitive in contemporary written Dutch on the basis of the SoNaR corpus and compare my results to those Fehringer obtained for spoken Dutch. I will look for semantic or grammatical features that could explain the fact that some verbs prefer *zullen* while others predominantly combine with *gaan* as a futural auxiliary verb. As the SoNaR corpus differentiates between Belgian and Netherlandic Dutch, it also allows us to investigate whether *gaan* is more grammaticalized in written Belgian Dutch.

Secondly, I will report on the changes with respect to the use of *gaan* or *zullen* + infinitive in the last two centuries on the basis of the *Staten-Generaal Digitaal*, a corpus that contains the parliamentary records of the Dutch Parliament since 1814. Following De Rooij's (1985/1986) assumption that *gaan* + infinitive became only widespread in the 20th century, an increasing use of *gaan* + infinitive and a corresponding decline of the modal periphrastic future in the last two hundred years can be expected. I will test this hypothesis by getting an overview of the general quantitative evolution of the use of the two future markers as well as having a look at a number of selected verbs that could illustrate the changing preferences for one of the two future markers over time.

Selected references

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