

Two routes towards locational readings for Germanic verbs

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Bleached readings for posture and motion verbs

Posture verbs (to sit/stand/lie/hang) and motion verbs (to come/fall) can all be used as lexical verbs. Some also show bleached uses in locational or temporal readings. Hence, the following sentence allows for two different interpretations:

- (1) Zit Anna in de tuin?
 sits Anna in the garden

Licit reply under the bleached reading:

Ja, ze **is** in de tuin. 'Yes, she is in the garden.'

Licit reply under the lexical reading:

Ja, ze **zit neer**. 'Yes, she is sitting down.'

Whether such verbs in continental West-Germanic languages show the bleached reading is language-dependent:

(2)

has a locational meaning in...	Dutch	Frisian	Low German	High German
to sit	✓	✓	✓	✗
to stand	✓	✓	✓	✓
to lie	✓	✓	✓	✓
to hang	✓	✓	✓	✓
to come	✓	✓	✓	✓
to fall	✓	✗	✗	✗

Two routes to the bleached reading

I argue that there are two routes for such verbs towards the bleached reading: they can function as states (in the sense of Dowty) with an inanimate subject or they can grammaticalise into a copula. The first route is taken by the verbs *to stand*, *to lie* and *to hang*. This strategy is generally available in continental West-Germanic. For reasons of space, I save the arguments for the talk. The verbs *to sit*, *to come* and *to fall*, in contrast, depend on grammaticalisation into a copula for the bleached reading. This process is language-dependent.

Recognising a copula

Copulas are covert in Dutch locational small clauses. The copula *zijn* 'to be' is overtly present in a main clause (see (3a)), but it obligatorily disappears in the corresponding small clauses (3b):

- (3) a. Anna is in Frankrijk.
Anna is in France
b. *Ik zag Anna in Frankrijk **zijn**.
I saw Anna in France be

Lexical verbs do not disappear in small clauses:

- (4) Ik zag Anna in de tuin **werken**.
I saw Anna in the garden work.

Bleached readings of Dutch *zitten*, *komen* and *vallen* pattern with the copula *zijn* in small clauses. (Imagine that the 'I saw...' sentences are answers to the question 'What did you see in your dreams?'):

- (5) # Ik zag Anna in Frankrijk zitten.
I saw Anna in France sit (no bleached reading)
- *Ik zag de oorlog in de Middeleeuwen vallen.
I saw the war in the Middle.Ages fall
- * Ik zag Merkel uit Spanje komen.
I saw Merkel from Spain come.
(Intended: I saw Merkel was born and raised in Spain.)

The following verbs behave as copulas in parallel examples:

- (7) Frisian: sitte, komme
Low German: sitten, komen
High German: kommen

Verbs of the first route (*stand*, *hang*, *lie*), in contrast, are fine in the small clause (here illustrated for Low German, but true for all languages under discussion). They are still lexical verbs:

- (6) Ik sach dei Eiffelturm in Spanien stoan.
I saw the Eiffel.tower in Spain stand

These two patterns account for the variation in table 2: *to stand*, *hang* & *lie* can function as states with inanimate subjects in all languages, *to come* grammaticalised into a copula in all languages, *to fall* only did so in Dutch and *to sit* did not do so in High German.