

Word order and person marking in West-Germanic imperatives

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This paper discusses contrasts in fronting in imperatives (FII) in West-Germanic language varieties. Whereas Standard Dutch does not allow FII, Eastern Dutch and German do. In Eastern Dutch, FII is restricted to distal deictics. Standard German does not impose restrictions on the elements that can be fronted. These contrasts are illustrated with the data below (Barbiers 2013).

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|---|-----------------------------------|
| (1) Lees dat boek maar niet!
read that book PRTC not
'Don't read that book!' | Standard Dutch: no FII |
| (2) Da doe maar!
that do PRTC
'Just do it!' | Eastern Dutch: restricted FII |
| (3) Das Buch lies besser nicht!
that book read better not
'Don't read that book!' | Standard German: unrestricted FII |

The novel observation of this paper is that FII correlates with verbal umlaut. I will argue for a pre-syntactic analysis of verbal umlaut, i.e. I show that different stems are featurally specified in the lexicon. Based on an analysis of imperatives as second persons (in line with e.g. Zanuttini et al 2012), and making use of the theory of person by Harbour (2016), I will show that the different patterns of verbal umlaut allow us to derive the attested patterns of FII.

References

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- Zanuttini, R., Pak, M., & Portner, P. (2012). A syntactic analysis of interpretive restrictions on imperative, promissive, and exhortative subjects. *Natural Language & Linguistic Theory*, 30(4), 1231-1274.