THE DIACHRONY OF COMPLEMENTIZER AGREEMENT

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Weise (1907) attributed the emergence of complementizer inflection to analogical extension. Recently, Goeman (2000) or Zwart (2006) also proposed an analogical-extension approach. For instance, Zwart's (2006) proposal is based on the analogical schema in (1):

(1)   *kunt : kunnə :: dat : dattə*

This means "that complementizer agreement originates as an analogical extension of the morphology of the verb in verb—clitic constructions to the complementizer in complementizer—clitic constructions" (Zwart 2006: 67).

I will also assume a kind of analogical extension, but in a different form. In those cases where the verb in second position developed new inflection which differs from the standard inflectional marker, children acquiring the language may have associated the new inflection with the second position (i.e. C°) rather than with the verb itself. They may then have produced inflection on the complementizer as well. Double agreement originated from phonological processes (Weiß 2005). However, this system must have been somehow grammaticalized, because in some dialects there are cases attested where in the inversion structure the normal ending in the 1 and 2PL was substituted by a form taken from another tense or mood (Höhle 1997). This system has been broadly attested for Low German dialects since the Middle Low German period – as well as for Old English and Dutch (dialects). It is presumably no chance that there was already an 'Einheitsplural' in Old Saxon (Gallee 1993), where the 2PL ending -ð/d also intruded into the 1 and 3PL. As a consequence, at least in the 1PL presence indicative, the speakers could no longer connect the inflectional difference to its phonological motivation. From this point on it was a syntactic rule. And that was presumably the general way CA emerged.

I will also discuss the question of at which time CA developed in German, and present some new data from the Nurimbergian 16th century poet Hans Sachs which are probably the first attested instances of CA, cf. (2a-c):

(2)   *a*   *Dast uns so weit fuerst aus der stat (Sachs, FNS 244 V.152)*
                      that-2SG us so far lead out the town
             b   *dast in habst verlorn (Sachs, FNS 172 V.127)*
                      that-2SG him have lost
             c   *dast ein zygeuner seist (Sachs, ML 126 V.211)*
                      that-2SG a gipsy are

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