

The complementizer system of Modern West Frisian

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In my talk I will present an analysis of the complementizer system of Modern West Frisian and show in which respects it may add to our understanding of the complementizer systems in other (West) Germanic languages.

Modern West Frisian has a relatively complex complementizer system. Superficially it seems to possess three finite complementizers: apart from the THAT-type complementizer (1a) and the IF-type complementizer (cf. (1b)) familiar from the other Germanic languages it boasts an enclitic complementizer 't (cf. (1c)).

- (1) a. *dat* [dət] 'that'
b. *oft* [ɔt] 'if'
c. 't [t]

Moreover, the distribution of these three elements is a rather tangled matter. The complementizer *dat* occurs in declarative clauses (cf. (2a)) and the complementizer *oft* in interrogative (dubitative) clauses (cf. 2b):

- (2) a. *Hy seit , dat* er jûn komt. (declarative)
'He says that he comes this evening'
b. *Ik freegje, oft* er jûn komt. (interrogative)
'I ask if he comes this evening'

In embedded *wh*-clauses, relative clauses and adverbial clauses the situation is more complex, however. Compare, for example, the patterning in (3):

- (3) a. *Ik freegje, wa *dat / oft / 't* jûn komt. (wh-clause)
'I ask who is coming this evening'
b. *de studint, dy *dat / *oft / 't* jûn komt. (relative clause)
'the student who comes this evening'
c. *It famke, dy har heit *dat / oft / *'t* stoarn is. (relative clause)
'the girl, whose father died'
d. *nei dat / *oft / 't* de fleanmasine lanne wie. (adverbial clause)
'after the plane landed'

I will try to account for the distribution of the three complementizers in Modern West Frisian and to determine (at least some of) the parameters that are responsible for the variation in the complementizer systems of the (West) Germanic languages.