

The development of future *gaan* in Dutch

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Contemporary Standard Dutch offers several possibilities to express future meaning. Apart from the frequently used futural present, it has two periphrastic future constructions: *zullen* + infinitive, with a modal source, and *gaan* + infinitive, where the auxiliary verb has evolved from a movement verb. Together they constitute a complex system of functionally distinct futures. In present-day Dutch *zullen* + infinitive can have a merely temporal meaning, expressing the intention of the agents, but it can also have deontic and epistemic functions, whereas *gaan* + infinitive has a future meaning in combination with verbs expressing an action or a kind of change in the near future. Future *gaan* occurs more frequently in spoken than in written language and its emergence and spread seems to be a fairly recent development (Haeseryn 1997: 976–978).

In our contribution to the conference we want to empirically investigate when future *gaan* emerged and which mechanisms of language change can account for the development of *gaan* + infinitive into a new future marker next to the already existing *zullen* + infinitive. Which language-internal and/or language-external factors influenced this evolution? Was its emergence boosted by the influence of fully grammaticalized French *aller* + infinitive, since future *gaan* + infinitive has a stronger position in Flanders than in the Netherlands (De Rooij 1985)? Or did future *gaan* result from an on-going process of grammaticalization that was bound to paradigmatic constraints? More specifically, we want to explore whether our preliminary results can confirm or disprove the evolutionary stages of future *gaan* + infinitive proposed by Decroos (2000: 113): motional main verb *gaan* > spatial auxiliary verb *gaan* > inchoative auxiliary verb *gaan* > future auxiliary verb *gaan*.

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