An acquisitional view on optionality *Jacqueline van Kampen*
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Abstract
This paper argues that true optionality does exist. It is even inherently tied up with the procedure of parameter setting in child language. The marked value of a parameter is set by adding a grammatical feature to a lexical category. The enriched category requires a mere specific licensing and will in general block its initial less specified default variant. The default variant survives sometimes, leading to optionality. Two clear cases of optionality are presented here. The first case is pied-piping in Polish adult and in Dutch child language, the second case is long reflexives in Dutch. The two cases show how the optionality may be due to an independently existing licensing possibility within the same grammar. The alternative explanation by Kroch (1989), Roeper (1999) and Yang (2000) of two co-existing grammars is rejected by the present proposal.

1 Introduction
Optionality is all over the place in language acquisition. There is in child language a changing mixture of less specified forms and more specified forms of the adult target language. One may look at language acquisition as the eventual blocking of less specified forms by more specified forms. Blocking is a procedure over time and the more specified variants compete for some time with the earlier and less specified variants. The adult forms 'fade in'. Moreover, the successive blockings of less specified variants respect among each other a fixed predetermined hierarchy of appearance. For instance, grammatical specifications like reflexivization and wh-movement in Dutch child language will not appear before there are finite verbs and finite verbs will not appear regularly before theta frames are established (Van Kampen 1997). This raises questions like the following.

(1)   a. Why do the less specified forms of child language appear at all? They are often not in the adult input.
       b. Once the less specified forms are there, why should they disappear ever? Less specified forms must be easier as well as more general.

The present paper will consider two cases in child language as the optional addition of a grammatical feature to a lexical item (section 2). The remaining of section 1 will elaborate the idea that the optional presence of a grammatical feature may be seen as a blocking failure.

1.1 Optionality as a blocking failure
I propose here that each more marked grammatical characteristic has a natural default form. The default appears as a first approximation of the target characteristic. The more marked form is filled in later and may eventually block the default. It is assumed throughout that the default and the later non-default form compete because they have the same Logical From (LF) representation. The initial default has the characteristics in (2) (Van Kampen 1997).

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(2)   *Initial default*
    a. It shows less lexical specifications for the same LF.
    b. It is acquired earlier.
    c. It has the stylistic status of an informal register.
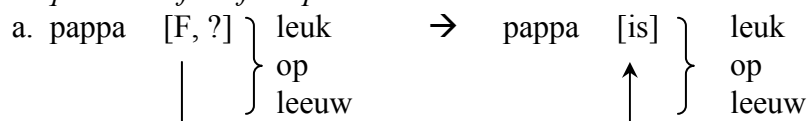   d. It may survive as an option in adult language due to independently existing licensing circumstances.

Lexical specifications for various functional as well as content categories may have further grammatical properties. The acquisition procedure will add them as grammatical features if they are present in the input sufficiently early and sufficiently robust.[1] Due to this procedure, the initial non-specified default will fade out and eventually get blocked. Blocking usually refers to a competition between morphological options in a paradigm. Suppletive and irregular forms are said to block the regular formations. *Foots* is blocked by *feet*, *he are* by *he is*, and *gooder* by *better*. Di Scullio and Williams (1987) pointed out that there is also a competition between phrasal and morphological realizations of a paradigm (*does walk - walks*).[2] The blocking competition between *phrasal forms ~ regular morphology ~ suppletive forms* can be understood as a competition between alternative realizations of an extended projection in the sense of Grimshaw (1991). They are alternatives for the functional categories that license the extended projection. All lexical content items are in principle accompanied by such functional categories. These may be spelled out by separate words for Degree/Aux/Determiner-Case, or by morphological inflection, or by suppletion.

   Evers (1988) proposed to extend the notions of paradigm and blocking to *extended projections*. The initial appearance of a functional category is often no more than a pause or a pause-vowel, and as such a matter of PF dummies. This is a type of underspecification for functional categories as has often been observed in the literature (Van Kampen, 1992; Hyams & Hoekstra, 1995; and many others later). Let me represent that as [<+F, ?>], where +F stands for licensing types like reference D, predication I, or degree DEGR (cf. Evers & Van Kampen 2001: 40, 45-46). The question mark stands for the unspecified form in phrasal or morphological phonology. The empty functional category [<+F, ?>] is a weak competitor for the real variants in the input, whether they are phrasal, morphological or suppletive. For example, the acquisition of <+fin> predicate marking starts in two-word sentences with a stress switch, see (3).
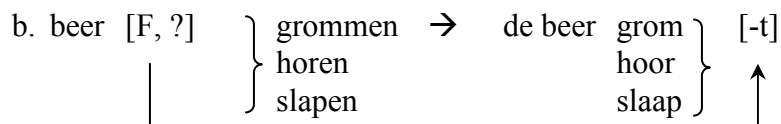
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[1] The notion 'robust' was used by Lightfoot (1990) and Valian (1991). Neither Lightfoot nor Valian develops the notion of robustness quantitatively. So these notions are at the moment used in an intuitive manner only. Evers & Van Kampen (2001) propose that the acquisition procedure will take a 100% decision on 70% input evidence within the relevant frame of +/− oppositions.

[2] It must be noted that Di Scullio and Williams (1987: chapt.1) see it somewhat differently. They feel that the notions 'blocking' and 'paradigm' cannot be defined with sufficient clarity. I owe the present view on blocking and paradigms basically to morphology class lectures by Arnold Evers (1988-1989). See for blocking of less specified forms as a 'meta-principle' also Williams (1997). Williams excludes the type of optionality presented here.
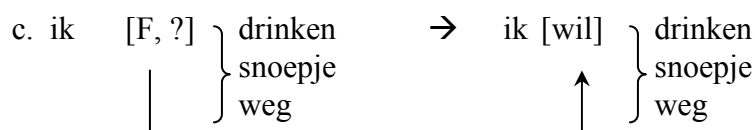
(3) *Acquisition of <+fin> predication*
 a. pappa   [F, ?] ⎱ leuk   →   pappa   [is] ⎱ leuk
                      ⎰ op   ⎰ op
                         leeuw   leeuw

      (daddy [F, ?] nice/on/lion   →   daddy *is* nice/on that/a lion)

 b. beer [F, ?]   ⎱ grommen →   de beer grom ⎱ [-t]
                     ⎰ horen   hoor ⎰
                        slapen   slaap

      (bear [F, ?] roar(ing)   →   the bear *is* roaring/hearing/sleeping)

 c. ik   [F, ?] ⎱ drinken   →   ik [wil] ⎱ drinken
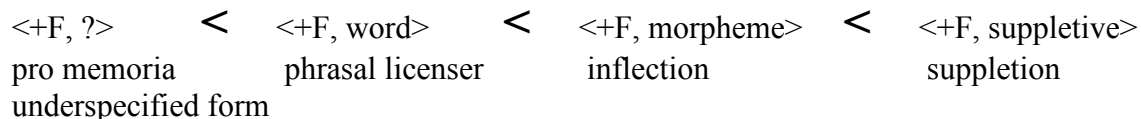   ⎰ snoepje   ⎰ snoepje
                       weg   weg

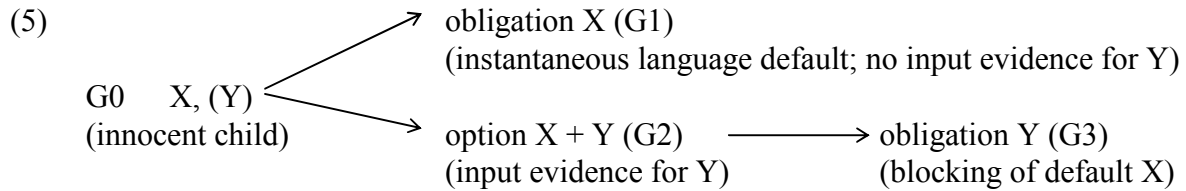   (I [F,?] drink/candy/away   →   I *want* drink/candy/away)

There is a blocking hierarchy. More construction-specific forms require more lexical information. They will block the lexically less specified forms, but of course they require more learning experience in frequency. The general scheme is given in (4)

(4) *Blocking hierarchy*: the more lexical specification, the more blocking

<+F, ?>	<	<+F, word>	<	<+F, morpheme>	<	<+F, suppletive>
pro memoria		phrasal licenser		inflection		suppletion
underspecified form						

The licensing alternatives that are more to the right in (4) ask for more lexical specifications. When the input insists sufficiently on the lexical specifications, the latter will enter the lexicon as a first choice that comes to the mind. Such a re-organized lexicon will subsequently block the more regular options in (4) to the left. Suppletive forms and irregular morphology can only survive in lexical items with a high input frequency. Case endings, for example, survive in D rather than in N, and suppletive forms survive in Aux rather than in V.

    Van Kampen (1997) argues that blocking in child language acquisition can be traced by longitudinal graphs. These start when the realization of *the marked (non-default) variant* Y is less than 10% and they end when *the default form* X is less than 10%. The acquisition graph of fully effective blocking models a parameter setting on the more specified value Y, see G3 in (5). Fully effective blocking is not guaranteed. Under special licensing conditions a free option between X licensing and Y licensing is maintained. My view is that optionality in the adult grammar is to be explained as a blocking failure in acquisition or by an incidental overlap between different licensing options. If this is correct, cases of optionality will show the partial survival of an initial default X, see G2 in (5).

(5)

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                              ↗  obligation X (G1)
                                 (instantaneous language default; no input evidence for Y)
    G0    X, (Y)
    (innocent child)          ↘  option X + Y (G2)  ⟶  obligation Y (G3)
                                 (input evidence for Y)      (blocking of default X)
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where
X = default parameter value (lexically less complex)
Y = non-default value (lexically more complex)
G = grammar (in child, adult formal or informal language)

The marked (non-default) parameter value Y must consist in adding a feature <Y> to a class of lexical items. Say, the feature 'strong inflection' to a subclass of verbs V<+Y>. Absence of <+Y> will then indicate weak or default inflection. Verbs in G3 of (5) will then be either V<+Y> (strong) or V<–> (weak). Verbs in G1 will only be weak: V<–>. Verbs in G2 will be weak V<–> or weak with the option of a strong alternative V<–> and V(<+Y>).

   A somewhat similar idea of optionality and defaults in child language has already been expressed by Lebeaux (1988:173f,180) and by Clahsen (1991:365f). The child has two values at his disposal for a parameter, the default value X as well as a more marked value Y. Although the eventual parameter value Y is known and used correctly, the default X remains in use for a long period. This suggests that the non-default Y is more difficult from a computational point of view. The beginning language learner holds on to the value X as an easy way out. He is probably aware of the fact that Y represents the correct value and his occasional use of X is a matter of performance rather than of competence. The full mastery of Y is a long-term goal. For this reason Lebeaux compares fixing the parameter with `hill climbing', rather than setting a switch in an elevator. The choice between the two is *more a question of performance than of competence*. If the language learner cannot make it to the top of the hill, he falls back into a less costly 'hollow'. The crucial difference with the present view is that according to Lebeaux (1988) the grammar with an optional rule (G2 in (5)) can never be a final grammar. Moreover, the default value is interpreted in the present view as 'closer to the LF representation'. See Van Kampen (1997) for an elaboration on this matter.

   It is not possible to demonstrate that all optionality can be analyzed as above, but there is quite a list of candidates. See the examples in (6) and a further analysis in Van Kampen (1996).

4

(6) a. Overgeneralization of P° stranding
    (option: P-stranding or pied-piping)

ik weet	*hoeveel*		we	[*t_wh mee*]	zijn	(Laura 6;10)
I know	how many		we	with	are	
ik weet	[*met hoeveel*]_PP		we	*t_PP*	zijn	(adult/later child Dutch)
I know	with how many		we		are	

  b. Spell-out of hidden <wh>-positions in wh-chains
    (option: intermediate wh-pronoun or complementizer)

in welk huis	denk je	*waar*	ze wonen?	(Sarah 4;10)
in which house	do you think	where	they live?	
in welk huis	denk je	*dat*	ze wonen?	(adult/later child Dutch)
in which house	do you think.	that	they live?	

  c. Evasion of V-2nd by *do*-insertion
    (option: *do*-insertion or V-movement)

ik	*doe*	ook	praten	(Sarah 3;4)
I	do	also	talk	
ik	praat	ook	t_V	(adult/later child Dutch)
I	talk_{<+fin>}	also		

  d. Spell-out of hidden positions in Neg-chains
    (option: negative concord or simple Neg)

Ik heb	*niemand*	*niet*	gezien	(Sarah 3;2)
I have	nobody	not	seen	
ik heb	*niemand*		gezien	(adult/later child Dutch)
I have	nobody		seen	

  e. Violation of the Left Branch Condition in A-bar movements
    (option: 'left branch' extraction or pied-piping)

welke		wil	jij	[*t_wh liedje*]	zingen?	(Sarah 3;7)
which		want	you	song	sing?	
[*welk liedje*]_DP	wil	jij	t_DP		zingen?	(adult/later child Dutch)
which song	want	you			sing?	

  f. Use of free anaphors in small clause and ACI constructions
    (option: free anaphor or long reflexive)

hij had	eerst	helemaal geen net	bij *'m*	(Tinke 4;9.11)
he had	at first	not at all a net	with him	
hij had	eerst	helemaal geen net	bij *zich*	(adult/later child Dutch)
he had	at first	not at all a net	with 'zich'	

I will consider in this paper the last two cases, in (7) optional pied-piping in A-bar movement and in (8) optional long reflexives. Example (7)a is child language, and effectively blocked in adult Dutch. Example (7)b remains an option in adult grammar. The co-reference option in (8) is again true optionality in the adult grammar and due to a blocking failure of the pronominal *'m/d'r*-form ('him'/'her').

(7) *Optional pied-piping in A-bar movements*
     a. child Dutch
        X: *welk* wil jij *liedje* zingen?   (which will you song sing?)
        Y: *welk liedje* wil jij zingen?   (which song will you sing?)
     b. adult Dutch
        X: *welk liedje* wil jij *over Eva* zingen? (which song will you about Eve sing?)
        Y: *welk liedje over Eva* wil jij zingen?   (which song about Eve will you sing?)

(8) *Optional long reflexives*
     a. adult/child Dutch
        X: Eva$_i$ zag de slang naast *d'r*$_i$ (Eve saw the snake next to her)
        Y: Eva$_i$ zag de slang naast *zich*$_i$ (Eve saw the snake next to 'zich')

The analysis of (7) and (8) will lead me to the research questions in (9).

(9) *Research questions*
     a. What makes blocking successful? (why are certain rules obligatory in principle?)
     b. What allows its incidental failure? (how do certain rules remain optional?)

2 First example: Optional pied-piping in A-bar movements

Languages vary in optionality for pied-piping in A-bar movements. There is optionality in child Dutch, followed by a successful blocking in adult Dutch. The optionality remains in Polish.

(10) adult Dutch   non-default obligation   Y (G3)
      adult Polish/child Dutch   optionality   X + Y (G2)

      X: *welk* wil jij [t$_{wh}$ *liedje*] zingen?   (which will you song sing?)
      Y: *welk liedje* wil jij t$_{wh}$ zingen?   (which song will you sing?)

Section 2.1 considers the optionality in adult Polish and section 2.2 the optionality in child Dutch.

2.1 Adult Polish/Latin: <+/- pied-piping>

Adult languages like Polish/Latin strand the NP complement optionally, these are the so-called Left Branch Extractions (Ross 1967, Corver 1990).[3] See the examples of wh-movement sub-extractions in (11).

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[3] I will consider here the optional stranding of NP-remnants only. Both Polish and child Dutch may as well strand AP remnants of a DegrP. See for the theoretical implications Van Kampen (1997, 2000).

(11) *Optionality in wh-movement* (adult Polish)

    a. X: *jaki*   wykreciles   [t_{wh} *numer*] ?
         (which (you) dialed   number ?)
      Y: *jaki numer*   wykreciles t_{wh} ?
         (which number (you) dialed ?)

    b. X: *o ktorej*   rozmawial Jan z   tym chlopcem   [t_{wh} *teorii*]?
         (about which spoke   Jan with this boy t_{wh} theory?)
      Y: *o ktorej teorii*   rozmawial Jan z   tym chlopcem t_{wh} ?
         (about which theory spoke   Jan with this boy t_{wh}?)

The subextracted wh-element in Polish a) tends to carry the stress, b) is stylistically less formal than its pied-piping variant, and c) involves selecting from a presupposed set (see also Matieu 2002).[4] That is, the intention of variant X in (11)a is that there is a set of telephone numbers and one is asked to select a specific item of that set. The main stress in the pied piping variant Y might be preferred on the N *numer*, but main stress on *jaki* is also possible. The pied-piping variant then need not be different in stress. It may stylistically be more formal, but does not exclude presupposition. There is true optionality, i.e. there are two PF distributions for the same LF form.

    The Left Branch Condition is a matter of parametric variation.[5] In Van Kampen (1994 and subsequent work) it was interpreted as involving a PF condition on case-marking. Polish, as well as Latin, are characterized by morphological case on N^o. There is no obligatory D^o in such languages. One might compare this with the case-marking in German. German does have some case-marking on N^o but it requires presence of the D^o. The obligatorily present D^o expresses the case. Case on the German N^o/NP is by agreement only. Slightly more formally, the Polish N is N<+Case> (morphological case) and the German one is N<+D ---- > (context indicated case). The distinction between 'morphological case' versus 'context indicated case' seems to me a better and more structural approach, than the less committal 'richly inflected' (Ross 1967). The morphologically case-marked N/NP in Polish is independently case-marked, can be stranded and provokes pied-piping as an option only. By contrast German and Dutch do not have a N/NP that is licensable out of its determiner context <+D ---- >. Pied-piping is obligatory in such languages.[6] This is given in (12).

(12) *Case*
    a. contextual   D<+Case>   N<+D --- >   Dutch/German
    b. morphological N<+Case>   Polish
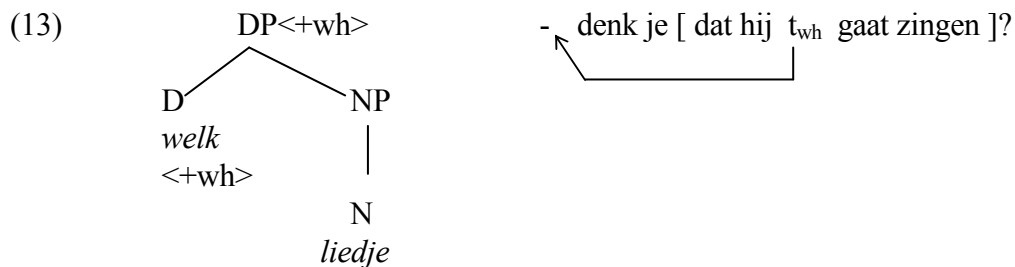
2.2 Child Dutch: <+/- pied-piping>

Adult Dutch requires obligatory D^o-marking on nouns, and the wh-element in adult Dutch pied-pipes its NP complement obligatorily. The wh-element in (13) is an operator with clausal scope. It moves into a Spec,C. The rest of the wh-phrase is moved along.

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[4] Many thanks to my Polish informant Anna Mlynarczyk.
[5] See for various explanations of the extraction facts Corver (1990), Mathieu (2002) among others.
[6] In adult Dutch/German a DP can be subextracted from a complex DP in '*welke kritiek* denk je dat hij [t_{wh} *op zijn boek*] hoorde?' ('which criticism do you think he heard [t_{wh} on his book?]'). The analysis here suggests that this is possible because the remnant PP is inherently case-marked.

(13)   DP<+wh>   - denk je [dat hij t$_{wh}$ gaat zingen]?

           D   NP
        welk
        <+wh>
                     |
                     N
                  liedje

(which song do you think he will sing t$_{wh}$?)

Dutch child language, by contrast, looks like Polish. It optionally sub-extracts the left branch element in A-bar movements. Child language allows and even prefers for some time to have no pied-piping at all. A count reported in Van Kampen (1997: 117) resulted in 60 cases of complex wh-phrases in child Dutch, 39 of them stranding the complement, and 21 pied-piping it. See the examples of optional pied-piping in wh-movement in (14). X is again the default form in child language and Y the adult specified form.

(14) *Optionality in wh-movement* (child Dutch)
     a. X: *welk* wil jij [t$_{wh}$ *liedje*] zingen?   (which will you song sing?)   (S. 3;7)
         Y: *welk liedje* wil jij t$_{wh}$ zingen?   (which song will you sing?)

     b. X: *welke* wil jij [t$_{wh}$ *boekje*]?   (which want you booklet?)   (S. 2;9)
         Y: *welk boekje* wil jij t$_{wh}$?   (which booklet want you?)

Optional pied-piping also occurs with Focus movement, see some examples in (15). See for a detailed analysis Van Kampen (1994, 1997, 2000).

(15) *Optionality in Focus movement* (child Dutch)
     a. X: ik wil *díe*$_i$ **niet** [t$_i$ *boek*] lezen!   (L. 2;9.2)
             I   want thát$_i$ not   [t$_i$ book] read!
         Y: Ik wil [*dát boek*]$_i$ **niet** t$_i$ lezen
             I   want [thát book]$_i$ not   [t$_i$ read!
             (I do not want to read thát book)
     b. X: *díe*$_i$ heb ik **wel**   [t$_i$ *sok*] aan   (S. 2;3)
             thát have I indeed   sock on
         Y: [*díe sok*]$_i$ heb ik **wel** t$_i$ aan
             thát sock have I indeed on
             (I have indeed thát sock on)
     c. X: is *ándere*$_i$ **nou** [t$_i$ *puzzel*]?   (L. 2;6.24)
             (where) is óther   now puzzle?
         Y: waar is [*de ándere puzzel*]$_i$ **nou** t$_i$?
             (where is the óther puzzle now?)

8

(16) {is} [-]$_{Spec,FP}$ [[andere [nou]$_{Fo}$]$_{Fo}$ [.. [$_{DP}$ D^o [puzzel]]......]$_{VP}$
      <+focus> <+focus>   t$_{focus}$

Morphological case explains the difference in stranding possibilities between adult Dutch on the one hand and adult Polish/child Dutch on the other hand. The distribution options in child Dutch look like Polish as long as the D^o/Case configuration has not yet been acquired, see (17).

(17) a. The stranded NP in Polish is morphologically case-marked and licensed
      b. The stranded NP in child Dutch need not yet be licensed by configurational case-marking

Here we see a source of optionality. Pied-piping is optional in Polish, because Polish happens to have morphological case on N^o. This circumstance does not have anything to do with pied-piping and wh-movement. Yet, there is optional pied-piping as a side effect. It follows in Polish from an accidental overlap between morphological case and configurational pied-piping as more general licensing possibilities. Lack of morphological case will force pied-piping and prevent subextractions. Lack of configurational case will force morphological case and allow subextractions.

The competition between the pied-piping and the stranding variants confirms the other predictions as well. The initial default has the characteristics in (2) repeated here as (18).

(18) *Initial default*
      a. It shows less lexical specifications for the same LF.
      b. It is acquired earlier.
      c. It has the stylistic status of an informal register.
      d. Its survival is due to independently existing licensing possibilities.

The prediction in (18)a is met, because the non-pied-piping stranding variant shows less lexical specifications for the same LF. The prediction in (18)b is met, because the pied-piped variant surfaces later, at least in child Dutch, than the stranding variant. The prediction in (18)c is met, because the stranding variant is more informal spoken language in adult Polish. The prediction in (18)d is met, because the Polish morphological case marking on N^o functions as a licensing condition for the default variant.

3 Second example: Optional long reflexives

Dutch adult language optionally use a simple reflexive anaphor in PPs of small clause and certain infinitival, so-called ACI (Accusativus cum Infinitivo), constructions. Examples are given in (19) and (20). As one may see in (20), there is an infinitival phrase *de slang tegen zich praten* ('the snake talk to her'), where *de slang* ('the snake') is subject. The reflexive *zich* ('to her') is bound by *Eva* and as such it is bound outside its subject domain. It is a so-called long reflexive. The long reflexives are a notorious issue in the theory of binding, see Everaert (1986). The long reflexives are invariably simple reflexives *zich* (SE anaphor). The complex reflexive *zichzelf* is used if the reflexive and its antecedent belong to a set of co-arguments with theta oppositions. Although the long reflexive *zich* and its antecedent are co-arguments within the same IP domain in (19) and (20), there is no membership of the same case- or theta-opposition set.

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(19) *Optional long reflexives in small clauses* (adult Dutch)
  X: Eva$_i$ zag de slang naast *d'r*$_i$ (Eve saw the snake next to her)
  Y: Eva$_i$ zag de slang naast *zich*$_i$ (Eve saw the snake next to 'zich')

(20) *Optional long reflexives in ACI constructions* (adult Dutch)
  X: Eva$_i$ hoorde de slang tegen *d'r*$_i$ praten (Eve heard the snake talk to her)
  Y: Eva$_i$ hoorde de slang tegen *zich*$_i$ praten (Eve heard the snake talk to 'zich')

The X-variants with the free anaphor *d'r* ('her') are the default option.[7] The Y-variants with the reflexive anaphor *zich* appear late in acquisition graphs. Moreover, they 'fade in'. Beyond the realm of a direct theta/case frame, the free anaphor remains optional in colloquial Dutch.

(21) *Long reflexives are*
  a. LF related with free anaphors
  b. acquired later
  c. stylistically marked
  d. optional

(22) early child Dutch   default   X (Y) (G0)
  adult Dutch   optionality   X + Y (G2)

  X: Eva$_i$ zag de slang naast *d'r*$_i$ (Eve saw the snake next to her)
  Y: Eva$_i$ zag de slang naast *zich*$_i$ (Eve saw the snake next to 'zich')

The option in (19) and (20) between a free and a bound anaphor is an exception. In general, the possibility to express coreference by means of a bound anaphor will block the possibility to do so by a free anaphor, see (23).

(23) a. Jan$_i$ scheert zich$_i$ / *hem$_i$
   b. John$_i$ shaves himself$_i$ / *him$_i$

This can be understood as a blocking effect. The more local and construction specific bound anaphor *zich* blocks the free anaphor *hem* (Reinhart & Reuland, 1993; Reuland, 2001). The free anaphor *him* is in principle discourse identified and not syntactically constrained. Reuland (2001) raises the question how the indexing for co-reference, obviously syntax free for anaphors, could ever get entangled in syntactic conditions. He rejects the naïve assumption that this happens to be the way things are. He proposes that bound anaphors are D-elements, marked as defective for phi-features {number, gender, and possibly person} D <?φ>. They do not need an antecedent to be co-indexed with. They rather need an antecedent to fill in their underspecified phi-features. The phi-features that are copied from the antecedent cause identity of reference in the LF representation. Hence, bound anaphors need no pragmatic index to express their coreference with the antecedent. The locality restrictions on anaphor binding fit this picture. The I^0 category is the first c-commanding head that is bound to be fully specified for phi-features. This is due to the fact

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[7] The weak pronouns *'m* and *d'r* are the reduced forms of the strong pronouns *hem* ('him') and *haar* ('her'). The strong variants are often less felicitous in contexts like (19) and (20).

that the I^o category is defined by the standard EPP (Extended Projection Principle: Chomsky 1981, Rothstein 1983), a feature that requires the predicate to be subject oriented and that provokes Spec-head φ-agreement. A condition of 'earliest possible closure' locks the D<?φ> device up in the IP domain. The next question is why the free anaphor D<φ> with all its phi-features already in place is forced to be non-coreferential within the I^o-agr. Reuland (2001: 472) basic answer remains *blocking*, although he does not use that term. If a DP argument is I^o governed, it is possible to express coreference by means of an unambiguous device D<?φ>, i.e. by means of a bound anaphor. In such cases, it is not allowed to apply an ambiguous discourse device with co-indexing. The unpleasant problem is that some arguments seem to hesitate whether they are or are not I^o-related arguments. These are the DP objects of certain prepositions as exemplified in (19) and (20). Reuland (2001) proposes that these prepositions may incorporate into the I^o-headed verbal chain. If the P^o does, its object is an IP argument and coreference with the I^o must be expressed by a long reflexive. If the P^o does not incorporate into the verbal chain, its object does not become an IP argument and coreference with the I^o must be expressed by a free anaphor.

Les us assume that a preposition P^o that assigns autonomously a theta role to its object may have an additional lexical feature: (<incorporable>) or simply: (<predicative>). Since the feature is between brackets, it may or may not be included if the P^o is selected. If the feature is added, one will get an IP argument and possibly a long reflexive, but not a free anaphor. If the additional feature is not added, one will get an adjunct and possibly a free anaphor, but not a long reflexive. As claimed before, optionality is a morpho-syntactic feature added to a class of lexical items but between brackets.

The competition between the long reflexive and the free anaphor in PPs of small clauses and ACI constructions confirms the other predictions as well. The initial default has the characteristics in (2) repeated here in (24).

(24) *Initial default*
  a. It shows less lexical specifications for the same LF.
  b. It is acquired earlier.
  c. It has the stylistic status of an informal register.
  d. Its survival is due to independently existing licensing possibilities.

The prediction in (24)a is met, because the free anaphor variant, with the additional feature not added, shows less lexical specifications for the same LF. The prediction in (24)b is met, because the free anaphor variant is acquired earlier in child Dutch. The prediction in (24)c is met, because the free anaphor variant is more informal spoken Dutch. Written Dutch is better characterized by the prescript that one must use the long reflexive *zich*, if one can. The prediction in (24)d is met, because the use of a free anaphor as the argument of P^o outside the IP domain remains an independently existing default possibility.

4 Apparent or true optionality?

Parameter setting is often, but incorrectly, assumed to be instantaneous and to be effective by definition. Hence, the competitive variants within a grammar could not exist. This has lead to the idea that obvious cases of optionality in adult and child language must be explained away in terms of two co-existing grammars (Kroch, 1989; Lightfoot, 1999; Roeper, 1999; Yang, 2000). The

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postulation of two grammars is not that fortunate. It soon leads to the assumption of multi-grammars, since many parameters have their blocking failures. In addition the two grammars approach needs further qualifications to capture the following effects.

(25) *Optional alternatives*
      a. have necessarily identical LF representation;
      b. are predictable from language specific (independently existing) licensing conditions;
      c. have a predictable difference in stylistic value;
      e. have a predictable acquisition order.

None of these remarkable properties follow from the postulation of two co-existing grammars as such. The alternative advanced in this paper holds that optionality is inherently tied up with the procedure of parameter setting as a move from a default licensing to a marked licensing. The fact that the two values of a parameter are mutually exclusive may relate to the fact that the parameter either withholds a grammatical feature to a category in the lexicon (default value) or adds it (marked value). Once the value has not been or has been assigned to the category in the lexicon, the grammar cannot but follow the instruction incorporated in the lexicon. Although the default value gets blocked by the marked value of the parameter, it does not completely disappear. The default values will surface again in language acquisition and creolization when the marked value has not yet been captured. The default value may also surface in the fully adult competence. This will happen when the marked value is added to a lexical item as an optional value. The notation might be the marked value added to a lexical item, but between brackets, as in (26).

(26)   lexical item
               (<marked value>)

The marked value is necessarily learned later, possibly restricted to an idiomatic subclass, such as 'strong verbs'. If it is added as an option, it will define a more formal stylistic value and define a kind of doublet in the lexicon. Lack of case restrictions in child Dutch (and morphological case on the Polish N) yields the option of wh-subextractions. P^o-incorporation in Dutch yields the option of long reflexives. This lexical view on the matter invites the predictions mentioned in (25).

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