Style and grammar in political discourse: complementation and its argumentative-rhetorical potential

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Chapter 3
Style and Grammar in Political Discourse: Complementation and Its Argumentative-Rhetorical Potential

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Abstract This contribution is a plea to pay more systematic attention to the infrequently studied, fine-grained grammatical phenomenon of complementation in the analysis of political discourse. The way the Dutch radical populist Geert Wilders uses complementation serves as a case study to that end. In the first half of the contribution, an in-depth description of the phenomenon of complementation is given; it is argued that the use of complementation affects the degree of certainty by which a speaker presents his ideas. The second half of the contribution reports on a diachronic analysis of Geert Wilders' use of complementation in 47 parliamentary speeches held between 2004 and 2009. It is argued that Wilders' use of complementation significantly decreases between 2004 and 2009. The decrease is not a gradual transition: a break seems occurs between 2006 and 2007. This is an indication that Wilders offers less room for discussion from this period onwards. Strikingly, Wilders' changed use of complementation coincides with the moment that political scientists indicate as the moment that Wilders' political views radicalized. The case study not only shows that studying complementation can add to the inventory of linguistic phenomena relevant to the analysis of political discourse; it also stresses the significance of combining quantitative and qualitative methods of analysis for the quantification of stylistic phenomena.

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3.1 Introduction

In the analysis of political discourse, substantial attention has been paid to the way politicians formulate their message: there is a vast body of literature on rhetorical consequences of stylistic choices made by politicians.[1] Striking in this domain is the relative sparse attention for grammatical phenomena (cf. Fausey and Matlock 2010; Van Leeuwen 2012): the primary focus is mostly on other linguistic means (e.g. significant word choice, pronoun use, metaphor, etc.). As far as grammatical phenomena are studied, the focus is generally on linguistic means that can be used to hide agency, like nominalization and the passive voice (cf. Dirven et al. 2007, 1230), or on transitivity analysis and process types (Hart 2014; Jeffries 2010; Simpson 1993).

In a previous study (Van Leeuwen 2012), I have argued that the infrequently studied grammatical phenomenon of complementation can add to the inventory of linguistic phenomena relevant to the analysis of political discourse. However, in that study both the description of the phenomenon of complementation and the case study illustrating the relevance of complementation for political discourse analysis were rather rudimentary and brief. The aim of this contribution is, therefore, twofold. Firstly, I will substantiate that using complementation or not has argumentative-rhetorical consequences, by giving an in-depth description of the phenomenon (Sect. 3.2). Secondly, Van Leeuwen's (2012) claim that complementation can add to the inventory of linguistic phenomena relevant to the analysis of political discourse will be substantiated with a much more comprehensive case study, namely the way in which the Dutch radical populist Geert Wilders over the years made use of complementation in his speeches. I will substantiate that Wilders' use of complementation changed over time, and that this has argumentative-rhetorical consequences (Sects. 3.3 and 3.4). In the conclusion (Sect. 3.5), the main findings will be summarized and discussed.

3.2 Complementation and Its Meaning

Language users almost always have a choice when it comes to describing objects and states of affairs in reality. For instance, a glass filled for fifty per cent can be 'half full' or 'half empty', people who oppose a political leader can be characterized as 'freedom fighters' or as 'rebels', and while some politicians metaphorically describe the European Union as 'one big family', other politicians choose to

[1]This contribution is a revised version of an article that appeared in Dutch in *Tijdschrift voor Taalbeheersing* 34(1) 2012, 54–73, and of a part of my dissertation (Van Leeuwen 2015). I would like to thank Ton van Haaften, Jaap de Jong, Ninke Stukker, Arie Verhagen, two anonymous reviewers of *Tijdschrift voor Taalbeheersing* and two anonymous reviewers of this edited volume for their valuable comments on draft versions.

characterize this association of countries as 'a bottomless pit'. This kind of alternative wording is a matter of *style*, i.e. "the making of conscious and unconscious choices of certain linguistic forms and structures in preference to others that could have been chosen but were not" (Verdonk 2006, 202).

Numerous experiments have shown that stylistic variants produce different effects. For instance, it has often been studied what the actual effect is of describing a phenomenon from either a positive or a negative perspective (Holleman and Pander Maat 2009; Levin et al. 1998). Time and again, what emerges is that the image that language users have of the phenomenon concerned is affected by the phrasing that is adopted (Holleman et al. 2013, 31). Thus, a driving school that has a 'pass rate of 75%' is viewed as more attractive than a driving school with a 'fail rate of 25%'; similarly, an operation with a 'success rate of 50%' is taken into consideration sooner than an operation with a 'failure rate of 50%', etc.[2] Such experimental evidence illustrates that stylistic variants are not interchangeable semantically: they differ in the kind of *inferences* they invite (Verhagen 2015, 235), i.e., they steer the hearer in the direction of drawing different conclusions.

Verhagen (2005, 2008), building on insights from the French linguists Anscrombre and Ducrot (Ducrot 1996), argues that language users also can vary the 'argumentative strength' with which a hearer is steered in a certain direction. Consider examples (1) and (2). Utterances (1a) and (1b) have the same 'argumentative orientation': they both steer towards the inference 'let's not take the risk'. However, (1a) and (1b) differ in 'argumentative strength': (1a) is more powerful than (1b). Similarly, utterances (2a) and (2b) both direct the hearer in the same direction ('let's give it a try'), but differ in 'strength' with which this inference is enforced (Verhagen 2005, 43–45; 2008, 317–318):

(1) a. There is no chance that the operation will be successful.
    b. There is little chance that the operation will be successful.
(2) a. There is a chance that the operation will be successful.
    b. There is a small chance that the operation will be successful.

The notions of 'argumentative orientation' and 'argumentative strength' are also applicable to the phenomenon of *complementation*, i.e. subordinated subject and object clauses such as (3)–(6):

(3) I think they want to go home.
(4) It is generally known that the capacity of computer chips doubles each year.
(5) She wondered whether he would arrive on time.
(6) It is unclear how long this will continue.

Verhagen (2005) argues sentences like (3)–(6) can be seen as instances of a grammatical *construction*: they can be seen as concrete instantiations of a more

[2]The examples are derived from Holleman et al. (2013) and Levin et al. (1988).

abstract, underlying pattern with a conventionalized form and meaning.[3] More specifically, according to Verhagen (2005) complementation constructions consist of a 'matrix-' and 'complement-' clause, each having their own meaning. Consider the following example (cf. Verhagen 2005, 96):

(7)	Matrix clauses	Complement clauses
	a. I have reported before that	there has already been success in breeding.
	b. From the above it may now be concluded that	clones of mammalian embryosit will become possible in the near future (...).
	c. The director of GenTech even expects that	this will happen as soon as next year
	d. Others believe that	it may take somewhat longer
	e. but nobody doubts that	the cloning of a full-grown sheep or horse will be a reality within ten years.
	f. The question is whether	society is mentally and morally ready for this (...).

Complementation constructions have in common that the complement clause of the construction gives a description of reality, while the matrix clause rather gives a description of someone's *perspective* or *stance* towards that description of reality. In other words, the complement clauses give a description of the propositional content; the matrix clauses invite the hearer to consider this content from a certain point of view (cf. (7)). The matrix clause often gives an explicit indication whose stance is represented (e.g. (7a): *I*; (7c): *the director of Gen Tech*; (7d): *others*). In some cases however, such as (7b) and (7f), the matrix clause denotes a cognitive stance which is *not* explicitly related to someone. In these cases it is not immediately clear whose point of view is represented. In these so-called "impersonal complementation constructions" (Verhagen 2005, 133), the context may give a decisive indication of whose stance is adopted (Verhagen 2005, 131–137). In (7b) and (7f), for instance, it appears from the context that the matrix clauses express the writer's viewpoint.

Using a complementation construction or not can be seen as a stylistic choice which does not affect the argumentative orientation of an utterance, but its argumentative *strength*. This can be illustrated with another example (cf. Verhagen 2005, 105):

(8) Shall we drive to the fitness centre via the railway station?
  a. There is a diversion.
  b. I am sure that there is a diversion.

In (8), the argumentative orientation of answers (a) and (b) is the same. Both responses guide the addressee to draw the same conclusion: in both answers, the most likely inference is that it would be better to choose a different route. However,

[3]See Goldberg (2003, 2006) for the notion 'construction' and the underlying theoretical framework of construction grammar.

the two answers vary in argumentative strength: answer (a) presents the relevant information directly, 'as a matter of fact'. In sentence (b), this information is explicitly related to the subjective perspective of the speaker. As a result, in (b) the possibility is implied that there is a difference between the point of view taken and reality. This offers room for the listener to call into question the implied inference of the utterance ('take another route'). In (8a) such room is not offered: here the speaker simply *states* that something is the case.[4] Of course, this does not mean that a 'factual' description of reality such as (8a) cannot lead to discussion. The point is that the chosen formulation does not explicitly offer room for such discussion, due to the fact that the information is presented as a fact, and not as an opinion (as is the case in (8b)).

In other words, the alleged effect of using a complementation construction is that this grammatical construction offers room for the listener to call into question the inference to which the hearer is steered. This is due to the presence of a matrix clause, in which someone's perspective is introduced: the presence of a matrix clause evokes the possibility of other opinions on the matter. It is important to stress that this alleged effect of a complementation construction is independent of the lexical content of the matrix clause. The lexical content can be very diverse, and influences the degree of room for discussion as well. For instance, the formulation in (9) clearly is weaker than the ones in (10) and (11):

(9) *I think that* there will be a heat wave this summer.
(10) *I am absolutely sure that* there will be a heat wave this summer.
(11) *It's a fact that* there will be a heat wave this summer.

In this chapter, differences in argumentative strength among complementation constructions will not be considered. This is not prompted by a denial of differences in argumentative strength among complementation constructions, but by the fact that such differences are not the focus of this contribution. This study focuses on the difference between formulations *with* complementation and alternative formulations *without* this construction. In other words, instances like (9)–(11) are studied in comparison to an alternative formulation in which *no* complementation construction is used, i.e. (12):

(12) There will be a heat wave this summer.

As I have argued, there is a crucial difference between using a complementation construction or not: when a speaker uses such a construction, he presents his standpoint as an opinion, and not as a fact. Indeed, if the speaker has chosen to use a complementation construction, he *subsequently* can increase or decrease the room for discussion further with lexical choices, as (9)–(11) illustrate. However, even in

[4]Formulated in terms of Mental Space Theory (Fauconnier and Sweetser 1996): the crucial difference between (8a) and (8b) is that in (8b) a mental space is opened—which is not the case in (8a). Opening a new mental space suggests that the same description of reality can also be viewed from another point of view/another mental space. In an alternative formulation without complementation (i.e., (8a)), this suggestion is lacking (see also Verhagen 2005).

(11), in which the speaker says he is presenting a fact, the standpoint is actually presented as an opinion, due to the use of a complementation construction. A real factual presentation would have been (12): here, the coming of a heat wave is simply announced, without embedding this announcement in the perspective of the speaker (as is the case in (9)–(11)).[5]

In the analysis of political discourse, the presence versus absence of complementation has barely been studied so far (cf. Sect. 3.1). In the rest of complementation in political discourse can yield interesting results by means of a comprehensive case study, namely the way in which the Dutch radical populist Geert Wilders over the years made use of complementation in his speeches.

3.3 Geert Wilders and His Use of Complementation

3.3.1 Background

During the parliamentary elections that were held in the Netherlands in March 2017, the radical populist party '*Partij voor de Vrijheid*' (PVV, Party for Freedom) became the second largest political party of the country. The founder and leader of this political party is Geert Wilders. He presents himself as a politician who voices the ideas and interests of the common man (cf. Vossen 2011), and is well-known for his strong anti-Islam discourse (De Ruiter 2012, 42). Wilders' standpoints about the assumed threat and barbarism of Islam have caused a lot of controversy, both nationally and internationally. For instance, his anti-Islam movie *Fitna* (2008) led to commotion all over the world. In the Netherlands, Wilders had to defend himself in court against charges of inciting hatred and discrimination against Muslims. In 2011, the court discharged him from all accusations, considering that from a formal judicial point of view he was criticizing Islam and not Muslims themselves (De Ruiter 2012, 42). In 2014, legal proceedings were instituted against Wilders again, after he had stated that he would try to reduce the number of Moroccans in the Netherlands. The court found him guilty of collective insult and inciting discrimination against Dutch Moroccans. Wilders has taken the case to a higher court; this lawsuit will (probably) be later this year.

[5]An interesting point for future research would be to test this theoretically founded assumption in an experimental setting: is it also possible to assess experimentally that using a complementation construction offers more room for discussion than an alternative formulation without this construction? Such an experiment should focus primarily on the effect of the use of complementation constructions with relatively much argumentative force. Complementation constructions with relatively much argumentative force are for instance constructions in which certainty about the claim is stressed (*I am sure that X*; *it is a fact that X*), in which evidentials are presented (*I saw that X*; *I heard him say that X*), or an authority can be found (*The letter confirms that I was accepted in their school*). In an experiment, such constructions should be compared to alternative formulations lacking complementation.

Wilders is, however, not only controversial because of his political ideas. He also attracts a lot of attention with the way in which he formulates his standpoints. For instance, Wilders has often and fiercely been criticized for using strong pejorative language in Dutch parliament—which violates existing norms of Dutch parliamentary debate (Van Haaften 2011).

Looking at the judgments about Wilders' language use, it is striking that it has been suggested several times that Wilders' usage changed over time. For instance, Van Roessel (2009) writes:

> When one looks at his first contribution to a General Debate, in September 2005, one sees a Member of Parliament who sticks to the mores of The Hague.[6] His usage is like that of his fellow MP's. (...) During the last General Debate (i.e. September 2008) things are totally different. By then, Wilders' use of words has changed completely, and his argument focuses on one thing only: Islam. He calls the Budget 'a rubbish piece of work' (...).

Van Roessel's observation does not stand alone. For instance, Kuitenbrouwer (2010, 38) observes that Wilders was "still looking for his own timbre" in 2005: Wilders' parliamentary contributions were still quite abstract and full of political jargon by that time. According to Kuitenbrouwer (2010, 38) "it's a long-winded work to find such language in his contributions" in 2009. Also in 2009, the Amsterdam Court of Appeal (2009) judged that Wilders should be prosecuted for instigating hatred and discrimination (which led to the lawsuit mentioned above). The court motivated this by stating that Wilders' views 'in content and style are characterized by biased, strongly generalizing phrasings with a radical meaning, ongoing reiteration, and an increasing intensity, as a result of which hate is created'. Similarly, De Groot (2010) points out that Wilders' policy plans related to Muslims became more and more radical over the years, and states that 'his usage radicalized too'.

Apparently, Wilders' vocabulary changed over time. However, did his use of a subtle grammatical device like complementation change as well? More specifically, given the above-mentioned media judgements suggesting that Wilders' usage 'radicalized', did Wilders' use of complementation constructions with matrix clauses yielding his point of view decrease over time? If this is the case, it would be an indication that Wilders has over the years been offering less room for discussion.

3.3.2 Corpus

To investigate whether Wilders' use of complementation changed over time, a corpus of 47 speeches held by Geert Wilders in the Dutch House of Representatives was compiled. The corpus covers a period of six years: from the moment that Wilders

[6]The Hague' is used metonymically here for 'Dutch parliament' (the Dutch parliament is situated in the city of The Hague).

Table 3.1 Corpus overview speeches Wilders

Year	Number of words	Number of speeches
2004	8417	6
2005	9100	10
2006	8430	10
2007	8846	6
2008	8037	7
2009	8113	8

started his own political movement[7] in 2004 until the annual General Debate in September 2009. The speeches[8] deal with a variety of topics, such as the budgets of the ministries of Foreign Affairs and Justice, meetings of the European Council, the murder of the Dutch film director Theo van Gogh, safety measures for politicians, the global financial crisis, etc.[9] The speeches were taken from the official Proceedings of the House of Representatives; the number of words per year was held constant as much as possible. Table 3.1 gives an overview of the number of speeches analyzed and the number of words per year. For a more comprehensive overview of the corpus, I refer to my dissertation (Van Leeuwen 2015, 240–243).

3.3.3 *Method of Analysis*

The speeches were analyzed in two rounds, by using *Atlas.ti* (a computer program for qualitative data analysis).[10] First, all instances of complementation in the corpus were coded, i.e. all subject and object clauses.[11]

[7]Wilders started his political movement in 2004 under the name *Groep Wilders* ('Group Wilders'). In 2006 he changed the name into *Partij voor de Vrijheid* (PVV; 'Party for Freedom').

[8]Meetings of the Dutch House of Representatives consist of speeches on the one hand, and debates (i.e. interruptions and responses) on the other hand (see Wolthuis 2007). The current analysis focusses on the addresses that Wilders delivered.

[9]In all speeches Wilders had a similar political role: he was a member of the opposition.

[10]Atlas.ti is a computer program for qualitative data analysis. The program enables systematic coding of stylistic features in corpora. More information about the program can be found on www.atlasti.com.

[11]An exception was made for complementation constructions which are part of restrictive relative clauses (cf. (i)), and complementation constructions that are part of free relative clauses (cf. (ii)).

(i) At the end of December, Parliament adopted *a resolution (...) in which it is expressed that* a complete burka ban should be implemented. (W06_26)
(ii) *Whomever was still so naïve to think that* the Palestinian government would condemn this attack, will be deceived. (W04_03)

These two types of subordinate clauses do not function as independent text segments: instead, they present necessary information for identifying the referent to which they refer (cf. Verhagen 2001).

Complementation constructions which are part of elliptical sentences were coded manually per instance. The same holds for double embedded instances of complementation. Thus, two instances of complementation were counted in cases like (13) and (14):

(13) (…) *we previously have seen that* there was political haggling with the criteria, *and that* the common man in the Netherlands is the victim of the expensive euro (…). (W04_03)[12]

(14) *It is clear that* in the documents it is stated that there still is an increase in the number of victims of violent crimes. (W04_02)

The first round of analysis yielded 561 complementation constructions. However, not all these constructions are necessarily relevant. The question whether a decrease can be observed in Wilders' use of complementation constructions yielding his perspective in the matrix clause focuses on a *subset* of these 561 instances of complementation. This can be illustrated with a fragment like (15). In (15), the matrix clause of the complementation construction introduces someone's perspective, but from the context it is clear that this is not Wilders' point of view:

(15) For the man in the street, such measures make it for instance more expensive to go on holiday, only because *other-worldly ecology freaks are convinced that* the earth will warm up when you are flying to Crete with your family. (W08_87)

To exclude such instances of complementation, all 561 complementation constructions in the corpus were analyzed from a functional perspective in a second round of analysis. For each of the constructions it was determined whether Wilders' perspective is presented in the matrix clause, or not. During this analysis, it turned out that in the matrix clauses of complementation constructions, Wilders' perspective emerged in various ways. More specifically, 7 subtypes were detected. These subtypes differ in the degree and way in which Wilders' perspective comes to the fore. On one side of the spectrum, complementation constructions can be found in which only Wilders' perspective is present in the matrix clause, in an explicit way (cf. (16) and (17)). The other side of the spectrum consists of 'impersonal' complementation constructions (cf. Sect. 3.2), i.e. instances of complementation in which the point of view in the matrix clause is not explicitly linked to someone (cf. (18), (19)).

(16) *I think that* a minister should defend himself more strongly against this. (W07_120)

(17) *I know that* only bringing money to the problem does not work, (…). (W05_11)

[12]The abbreviations in brackets indicate the year the excerpt is taken from (i.e. 'W06' indicates a speech by Wilders in 2006), and are followed by a number that refers to the specific speech as it was uploaded to Atlas.ti. All examples are translated from Dutch by the author; the Dutch equivalents can be found in Van Leeuwen (2015).

(18) *It is clear that* Iraq still has a long road to go (...). (W04_03)
(19) *It is a fact that* we especially have a problem with Moroccans. (W06_01)

In between 4 other categories can be distinguished, in which Wilders' perspective is combined with the perspective of someone else. In two of these categories, this is *explicitly* the case—see (20)–(21) and (22)–(23), respectively:

(20) *We too think that* this was inevitable. (W08_1020)
(21) *At the same time, we see that* The Netherlands has to deal with big problems concerning the integration of these non-western immigrants. (W04_02)
(22) *No one understands that* it does not happen. (W04_04)
(23) *One would think that* Christians are allies (...). (W08_1002)

With an 'inclusive *we*' a speaker can indicate that his viewpoint is shared by others. For the analysis this category was split up further into two subcategories. On the one hand, a category was distinguished in which 'we' refers to Wilders' political party (the Party for Freedom, cf. (20)). Complementation constructions of the type '*The PVV takes the view that...*' were classified in this category as well. On the other hand, a category of 'other instances of inclusive '*we*'' was used (i.e. *we* Dutch citizens, *we* Dutch politicians, etc.)—cf. (21). This category was not further split up into subcategories: this could have been a study in itself (cf. Dieltjens 2007). Examples (22)–(23) are examples of matrix predicates with a generic subject. In this category, the speaker's perspective is part of a 'generic perspective'.

The other two categories with matrix predicates expressing a shared perspective are illustrated in (24)–(25) and (26)–(27) respectively. In these cases, there is no explicit indication that the matrix clause contains a shared perspective. At first sight, they do not express Wilders' point of view, but the opinion of someone else:

(24) *Approximately 1.5 years ago, the minister communicated that* 15 to 20 mosques in our country are radical (...). (W04_05)27
(25) *The people want that* we occupy ourselves primarily with solving their problems (...). (W06_23)
(26) *The SCP-report 2004 shows that* the number of suspects (...) has increased significantly. (W04_04)
(27) *The Integration Card 2005 made by Statistics Netherlands shows that* no less than one out of five young Moroccans (...) is registered (...). (W056_26)

In (24) and (25), the minister's point of view is presented; (25) presents the perspective of 'the people'. However, (24) and (25) implicitly express Wilders' point of view too. The contexts in which these sentences are presented indicate that the perspectives that are attributed to 'the minister' and 'the people' respectively are the same as Wilders' viewpoint on the matter. In other words, Wilders' viewpoint can be inferentially linked to the perspectives presented in the matrix clauses here. As a consequence, these matrix clauses express Wilders' perspective as well, in a slightly hidden way. The same holds for instances like (26) and (27): the points of view in these matrix clauses must be inferentially linked to Wilders as well, since Wilders is in agreement with the opinions of the 'SCP-report' and the 'Integration Card'.

Whether instances like (24)–(27) must or must not be included in the category of complementation constructions with Wilders' perspective in the matrix clause is very much dependent on the context. This is illustrated by sentences (28)–(29), in which Wilders distances himself from the perspective that is introduced in the matrix clause. In these sentences, the propositional content of the complement clause is presented only as the opinion of the source mentioned in the matrix clause, and not as Wilders' opinion too: Wilders is strongly opposed to a potential accession of Turkey to the European Union (cf. (28)), and to Islamic influences on Dutch society (cf. (29)). This means that the viewpoints in the matrix clauses of (28) and (29) cannot be inferentially linked to Wilders. As a result, different from the examples discussed before (i.e., (16)–(27)), cases like (28)–(29) have not been categorized as instances of complementation with Wilders' perspective in the matrix clause:

(28) *Last Sunday he said that* it would be an unpleasant thought and even unfair towards the Turks if referenda would keep them out from a full membership. (W04_06)

(29) *Minister Donner earlier said that* he could imagine the introduction of Sharia Law in the Netherlands, if the majority would be in favor of that. (W07_93)

The types of complementation discussed above are summarized in Table 3.2.

Table 3.2 Overview of types of complementation distinguished in the second round of analysis

I. Complementation constructions with Wilders' perspective in the matrix clause (split up in 7 subtypes that differ in the way and degree in which Wilders' perspective comes to the fore)	Subtype	Examples
	1. 1st person singular *I* think that…	(16), (17)
	2. 1st person plural *We (the PVV)* think that…	(20)
	3. 1st person plural *We* [rest] think that…	(21)
	4. Generic subject *Everyone* thinks that…	(22), (23)
	5. Person *Person X/he* thinks that…	(24), (25)
	6. Impersonal agency *The report* states that…	(26), (27)
	7. 'Impersonal' construction *It is* clear that…	(18), (19)
II. Complementation constructions without Wilders' perspective in the matrix clause	e.g.[a]: *Person X/The report* states that…	(28), (29), (15)

[a]Due to a lack of space, the category of 'Complementation constructions without Wilders' perspective in the matrix clause' cannot be fully discussed here. A more elaborate discussion can be found in Van Leeuwen (2015, 161–163)

The types of complementation in which Wilders' perspective is present in the matrix clause (Table 3.2, I, subtypes 1–7), differ in the degree in which Wilders' perspective comes to the fore (cf. for instance (16)–(17) with (18)–(19) or (24)–(27)), and in the degree in which Wilders' perspective is part of a broader perspective (cf. (16)–(17) with (20)–(27)). With this categorization a generalization is made, for instance, about the type of verb that is used in the matrix clause, in spite of the fact that the verb chosen seems to be quite influential with regard to the offered amount of room for discussion. As discussed in Sect. 3.2, the fact that in this study a generalization is made about lexical differences in the matrix clause, is not prompted by a denial of differences in argumentative strength among complementation constructions, but by the fact that such differences are not the focus of this contribution. This study focuses on the difference between formulations *with* complementation and alternative formulations without this construction. As I have argued, there is a crucial difference between using a complementation construction or not (see Sect. 3.2): when a speaker uses such a construction, he presents his standpoint as an opinion, and not as a fact.

In order to investigate whether complementation constructions with Wilders' perspective in the matrix clause reliably can be demarcated from instances of complementation *without* his point of view in the matrix clause, two coders analyzed a sample of 60 complementation constructions from the corpus (the first 10 constructions from each year) independently of each other. The interrater reliability was good (Cohen's Kappa K = 0.816). Subsequently, one coder (the author) analyzed all 561 complementation constructions in the corpus. For each instance of complementation in the corpus it was determined whether Wilders' perspective is presented in the matrix clause, and if so, how—by using the 7 subcategories of complementation summarized in Table 3.2 under 'I'. In this second round of analysis, double embedded complementation constructions were counted only once, and categorized under the first matrix clause. In other words, an instance like (14), for convenience repeated as below as (30), was counted 1, and included in subcategory I.7 ('impersonal complementation construction'). Similarly, an instance like (31) was included in subtype 3 ('*we*-rest')

(30) *It is clear that in the documents it is stated that* there still is an increase in the number of victims of violent crimes. (W04_02)

(31) Last week we could see that a study by Statistics Netherlands indicated that almost one million [of these non-western immigrants] is a Muslim. (W02_02)

The second round of analysis yielded 399 complementation constructions with Wilders' perspective in the matrix clause. In Sect. 3.4, I will report on the distribution of these instances of complementation. Is there a development in Wilders' use of complementation constructions with matrix clauses yielding his point of view? Did this type of constructions decrease between 2004 and 2009? If this is the case, it would be an indication that Wilders has over the years been offering less room for discussion.

Table 3.3 Complementation constructions yielding Wilders' perspective in the matrix clause between 2004 and 2009: absolute numbers (N = 399) and per 1000 words

Year	Complementation constructions	Per 1000 words
2004	86	10.22
2005	85	9.34
2006	74	8.78
2007	38	4.30
2008	55	6.84
2009	61	7.52

3.4 Results

3.4.1 Results of Quantitative Analysis

Table 3.3 gives an overview of the total number of complementation constructions with Wilders' perspective in the matrix clause per year, abstracted from its various subtypes. In other words, Table 3.3 shows the joint frequency of all 7 subtypes of complementation that in Table 3.2 have been distinguished under I.

Although Table 3.3 indicates that there is a decrease in the absolute number of complementation constructions over the years (with strikingly few instances in 2007), statistical analysis[13] yields that the decrease between 2004 and 2009 is not significant.[14]

However, when the results from Table 3.3 are broken down in its 7 subcategories, a more refined picture of Wilders' use of complementation emerges. This more detailed overview indicates that there actually *is* a certain development in Wilders' of complementation. Table 3.4 gives the absolute numbers per subcategory; in Table 3.5 the numbers are normalized per 1000 words.

Subdividing the instances of complementation into its subcategories, brings to light that the two most frequently used subcategories (category 1: '*I think* that...' and category 7: '*It is* clear that...') are more than halved between 2004 and 2009 (cf. Table 3.4/3.5). In both cases this decrease is statistically significant.[15] Moreover, the decrease seems not to be a gradual transition: within subcategory 1 (*I think* that...) a strong break occurs after 2006, and within subcategory 7 (*It is* clear that...) the largest decrease can be found between 2006 and 2007 as well. The fact that the *total* number of complementation constructions has not decreased

[13]For the statistical analyses log likelihood was used. More specifically, the statistical analyses were conducted by using the 'log-likelihood calculator' (see http://ucrel.lancs.ac.uk/llwizard.html). A log likelihood test allows for comparisons of frequencies in corpora even when the studied phenomena are relatively rare (Vis et al. 2012, 98).

[14]2004: 86/8417 versus 2009: 61/8113 = 3.40, $p > 0.05$.

[15]Subcategory 1 (I think that...): 38/8417 versus 16/8113, LL = 8.44, $p < 0.05$; subcategory 7 (It is clear that...): 21/8417 versus 9/8113, LL = 4.51, $p < 0.05$.

Table 3.4 Complementation constructions yielding Wilders' perspective in the matrix clause, per subcategory: absolute numbers

Complementation constructions yielding Wilders' perspective in the matrix clause								
Year	1. *I* think that…	2. *We* [the PVV] think that…	3. *We* [rest] think that…	4. *Everyone* thinks that…	5. *Person X* states that…	6. *The report* states that…	7. *It is* clear that…	Total
2004	38	0	12	1	8	6	21	86
2005	33	2	5	2	16	6	21	85
2006	32	4	5	4	8	6	15	74
2007	16	2	4	0	5	2	9	38
2008	17	7	2	4	10	4	11	55
2009	16	3	8	15	8	2	9	61

Table 3.5 Complementation constructions yielding Wilders' perspective in the matrix clause, per subcategory: normalized per 1000 words

Complementation constructions yielding Wilders' perspective in the matrix clause								
Year	1. *I* think that…	2. *We* [the PVV] think that…	3. *We* [rest] think that…	4. *Everyone* thinks that…	5. *Person X* states that…	6. *The report* states that…	7. *It is* clear that…	Total
2004	4.51	0	1.43	0.12	0.95	0.71	2.49	10.22
2005	3.63	0.22	0.55	0.22	1.76	0.66	2.31	9.34
2006	3.80	0.47	0.59	0.47	0.95	0.71	1.78	8.78
2007	1.81	0.23	0.45	0	0.57	0.23	1.02	4.30
2008	2.11	0.87	0.25	0.50	1.24	0.50	1.37	6.84
2009	1.98	0.37	0.99	1.86	0.99	0.25	1.12	7.52

significantly over the years is caused by the fact that Wilders' use of another subcategory has increased. Tables 3.4 and 3.5 show a substantial, sudden increase in subcategory 4 (*Everyone thinks* that…) in 2009. It seems that this increase of complementation constructions with an indefinite pronoun causes the total number of complementation constructions not to be decreased significantly between 2004 and 2009.

3.4.2 *Results of Qualitative Analysis*

The sudden rise of complementation constructions with an indefinite pronoun in 2009 raises the question whether there is a specific explanation for this increase. A closer look at the corpus brings to light that this is the case, indeed. The increase is caused by 13 instances of complementation in 1 speech:

(32) *One would expect that* fire is opened on Somali pirates who attack our ships, but we bring them to the Netherlands and give them free computer courses instead. *One would expect that* a Leftist politician stands up for woman's rights, but Mrs. Arib, colleague of the Labour Party, advises Moroccan women who have to deal with dominant men: Do not enter into the fray, you will lose anyway. (…). *One would expect that* the progressive city of Utrecht stands up for equality of man and woman, but it subsidizes separated office windows instead. *One would expect that* in the Labour bastion of Rotterdam there is no going back on the results of the emancipation. But still there are plans for apartheid performances in theatres, with special seats for Muslim women. (…) Madam Speaker, one would expect that (…). But (…). *One would expect that* (…). But (…). *One would expect that* (…).

The complementation constructions in (32) present Wilders' perspective in the matrix clauses. However, they burden disproportionately on the total number of complementation constructions in 2009. The construction seems to be repeated so often due to the fact that it is part of an elaborate figure of repetition ('One would expect that…. But….'), which functions as a unity and has its own rhetorical function: the figure of speech structures Wilders' argument. That is reason to count the 13 instances of complementation in (32) not as 13 separate tokens, but in total as 1.

However, such a qualitative analysis raises the question whether there are no other instances of complementation that are weighing disproportionately heavily on the total number of complementation constructions. A closer look at the rest of the corpus brings to light that the answer to this question is positive, indeed: a further qualitative analysis reveals that other speeches instances of complementation should also be treated differently in the analysis. More specifically, two more types of complementation need reconsideration. First, the following fragment occurs in the corpus—again in 2009. In Tables 3.3, 3.4 and 3.5, this fragment has been counted as containing 5 instances of complementation (subtype 7—'*It is* clear that…'):

(33) (…) that the cabinet is not carrying this motion, is not only inappropriate, is not only unheard-of, is not only impossible, is not only unacceptable, but also inadmissible. (W09_103)

In (33), the order of matrix clause(s) and complement clause is reversed: the complement clause is presented first. Of course, this does not take away the fact that Wilders' perspective is present in the matrix clauses. However, similarly to (32), it is highly doubtful whether these matrix clauses should be counted as separate tokens. The 5 matrix clauses cannot occur independently of each other. They function as a unity, due to the use of the construction 'not only… but also…'. Therefore, the matrix clauses in (33) should not be counted as 5 separate tokens, but together as 1.

The other type of complementation that needs reconsideration occurs in the corpus 14 times. Examples are given in (34)–(36):

(34) *I ask the minister-president when* we can await the implementation of the resolution. (W06_26)
(35) Therefore, *I ask the cabinet whether* it will consider this idea (...). (W07_103)
(36) *I ask the minister whether* it is true that one of the participating police officers overstepped the mark prior to this interrogation. (W05_15)

The complementation constructions in (34)–(36) must be considered in the institutional context of Dutch parliament. They illustrate a standardized way in which in the Dutch House of Representatives a question is asked; the prototypical function of complementation constructions seems to be lost. Therefore, it seems legitimate to leave this construction type out of the analysis. Wilders uses this construction type mainly in the period 2004–2005 (2004: 3x; 2005: 6x; 2006: 2x; 2007: 1x; 2008: 2x). The fact that this construction mainly occurs in the first years of the corpus is in line with Kuitenbrouwer's (2010) observations mentioned in Sect. 3.3.1: a decrease of this institutionalized way of formulating a question fits in the image that Wilders' usage has become less jargonized over the years.

All in all, the qualitative analysis gives rise to slight adjustments of the numbers in Tables 3.3, 3.4 and 3.5. The strong increase of subcategory 4 (*Everyone thinks that...*) in 2009 appears to be a distortion: there is good reason to count the complementation constructions in fragment (32) as 1 token, and the same holds for the 5 instances of complementation in (33). A distortion in the data occurs in the first years of the corpus as well: the construction type which is illustrated by (34)–(36) and is mainly present in the first years of the corpus, should be left out of the analysis.[16]

These findings lead to Tables 3.6 and 3.7. The numbers in bold indicate adjustments compared to Tables 3.3, 3.4 and 3.5.

The revised Tables 3.6 and 3.7 show that there *is* a development in Wilders' use of complementation, indeed: the use of complementation constructions yielding Wilders' perspective in the matrix clause decreases significantly between 2004 and 2009.[17] This decrease does not seem to be a gradual transition, however: a 'break' occurs between 2006 and 2007. This is an indication that Wilders has been offering less room for discussion from 2007 onwards.

How can this break in Wilders' use of complementation between 2006 and 2007 be explained? A possible answer could be that Wilders switched speechwriters, but this explanation is not very likely. Although Wilders indeed switched speechwriters over the years, this switch does not coincide in time with the moment that Wilders'

[16]It should be noted that leaving this construction out of the analysis is not prompted by opportunism. If the construction had not been excluded from the analysis, the described development in Wilders' language use would have been bigger.

[17]83/8417 versus 45/8113, LL = 10.10, $p < 0.01$.

Table 3.6 Complementation constructions yielding Wilders' perspective in the matrix clause, per subcategory: absolute numbers

Complementation constructions yielding Wilders' perspective in the matrix clause								
Year	1. *I* think that…	2. *We* [the PVV] think that…	3. *We* [rest] think that…	4. *Everyone* thinks that…	5. *Person X* states that…	6. *The report* states that…	7. *It is* clear that…	Total
2004	**35**	0	12	1	8	6	21	83
2005	**27**	2	5	2	16	6	21	79
2006	**30**	4	5	4	8	6	15	72
2007	**15**	2	4	0	5	2	9	37
2008	**15**	7	2	4	10	4	11	53
2009	16	3	8	**3**	8	2	**5**	45

Numbers in bold indicate adjustments compared to Tables 3.3, 3.4 and 3.5

Table 3.7 Complementation constructions yielding Wilders' perspective in the matrix clause, per subcategory: normalized per 1000 words

Complementation constructions yielding Wilders' perspective in the matrix clause								
Year	1. *I* think that…	2. *We* [the PVV] think that…	3. *We* [rest] think that…	4. *Everyone* thinks that…	5. *Person X* states that…	6. *The report* states that…	7. *It is* clear that…	Total
2004	**4.16**	0	1.43	0.12	0.95	0.71	2.49	9.86
2005	**2.97**	0.22	0.55	0.22	1.76	0.66	2.31	8.68
2006	**3.56**	0.47	0.59	0.47	0.95	0.71	1.78	8.54
2007	**1.70**	0.23	0.45	0	0.57	0.23	1.02	4.18
2008	**1.87**	0.87	0.25	0.50	1.24	0.50	1.37	6.59
2009	1.98	0.37	0.99	**0.37**	0.99	0.25	**0.62**	5.55

Numbers in bold indicate adjustments compared to Tables 3.3, 3.4 and 3.5

use of complementation changed. When Wilders started his political party in 2004, he initially wrote his speeches together with colleague Bart Jan Spruyt. However, Spruyt left the PVV in 2005 already; from that moment on, Wilders has written his speeches in close collaboration with the party ideologue, Martin Bosma (Vossen 2013).

Another possible explanation could be that the break in Wilders' use of complementation constructions is connected to a change in political standpoints. Not only journalists have stated that Wilders' political views radicalized over time (cf. Sect. 3.1): studies by political scientists suggest the same. Strikingly, these studies situate the radicalization of Wilders' standpoints from 2007 onwards. For instance, Vossen (2011), who investigates the ideology of the PVV, concludes that Wilders' political views undergo important shifts after 2006: he states that from that moment on, one could notice "stronger nationalism" in Wilders' views, "increasing populism", and "a more radical form of Islamophobia" (Vossen 2011, 185–186).

Similarly, Fennema (2010), investigating Wilders' political career, argues that Wilders became "more and more radical each day" in the first half of 2007 (Fennema 2010, 123–124, 149). According to Fennema it was in 2007 that Wilders started to cause consternation regularly with taking up controversial standpoints, as proposing a burka ban, and warning against what Wilders calls "the islamization of the Netherlands" (Fennema 2010, 129; see also Vossen 2013, 125–128). According to Fennema (2010, 129), Wilders' standpoints about 'the islamization' are the culmination of Wilders' "linkage of social problems to the presence of immigrants, who are connected directly to Islam". In the 47 speeches that were analyzed for the present study, the first time that the word 'islamization' turns up in the corpus is in 2007, indeed.[18] Fennema also mentions an opinion article in the Dutch national newspaper *de Volkskrant* (in which Wilders likened the Koran to Hitler's *Mein Kampf* and denied the existence of a tolerant Islam) as "a crucial step (...) in Wilders' radicalization" (2010, 132). This opinion article appeared in August 2007; 5 out of 6 of the speeches analyzed in the present study were held after the opinion article was published. Although the corpus analysis presented in this article cannot answer the question whether there is a *causal* link between the two developments, it is intriguing to see that the two developments *coincided*. The decrease in complementation constructions from 2007 onwards indicates that Wilders has been offering less room for discussion for his (apparently radicalized) standpoints.

3.5 Conclusion and Discussion

This contribution is a plea to pay more systematic attention to the infrequently studied, fine-grained grammatical phenomenon of complementation in the analysis of political discourse. A diachronic analysis of Geert Wilders' use of complementation in 47 parliamentary speeches held between 2004 and 2009 served as a case study to that end. In Dutch media it has been observed that Wilders' usage changed over the years. The diachronic corpus analysis reveals that this is also the case for Wilders' use of complementation constructions: Wilders' use of complementation constructions yielding his perspective in the matrix clause decreased significantly between 2004 and 2009. This decrease does not seem to be a gradual transition, there seems to be a 'break' between 2006 and 2007. Intriguingly, this break coincides with the moment that political scientists indicate as the moment that Wilders' political views became more radical.

As I have argued, using complementation or not is a stylistic choice which affects the amount of room for discussion offered by the speaker. As such, the observed decrease in complementation constructions in Wilders' speeches is an indication that Wilders has been offering less room for discussion since 2007.

[18]The first time the word occurs in the corpus is during the Debate about the Policy Programme 2007–2011, held 19 June 2007.

I deliberately use the word 'indication' here: using complementation or not is of course just one of *many* stylistic features influencing the argumentative strength of an utterance (cf., for instance, Fraser 2010). In order to be able to draw firmer conclusions, other stylistic features influencing the argumentative strength of an utterance should be analyzed in Wilders' speeches as well. This is a point for further research.

Methodologically speaking, the case study illustrates that quantifying stylistic devices also has a qualitative analytic component. Categories relevant to linguistic-stylistic analysis often are of a semantic nature (cf. Leech and Short 2007, 37); when mapping out such categories, qualitative analysis is indispensable. The analysis presented in this chapter is a case in point. In a first round of analysis, *all* complementation constructions in the corpus were counted. This is not very complex: it can be done on the basis of formal criteria, and could probably also be done computationally, by using a linguistic parser.[19] However, for the analysis, not *all* complementation constructions were relevant: the analysis focused on the more specific, semantic category of 'complementation constructions containing Wilders' perspective in the matrix clause'. Therefore, in a second round of analysis all complementation constructions in the corpus had to be analyzed from a functional perspective. For each of the constructions it was determined whether Wilders' perspective is presented in the matrix clause, or not. This second round of analysis involved *interpretation*: the question whether Wilders' perspective is present in the matrix clause, partly could only be answered by interpreting complementation constructions in the context in which they occur (cf. the discussion of examples (24)–(29) in Sect. 3.3.3. Moreover, *additional* qualitative analysis was needed to avoid misrepresentations in the data: further contextual analysis yielded that a few complementation constructions should be dealt with differently in the analysis (see for details the discussion of (32)–(36) in Sect. 3.3.3). In other words, the development in Wilders' use of complementation constructions has come to the fore by combining quantitative and qualitative analysis.

Finally, the analysis of Wilders' use of complementation constructions offers also new insights into the phenomenon of complementation. Thanks to the corpus analysis a more refined picture has emerged of the ways in which complementation can express the speaker's or writer's perspective. A new insight is that complementation constructions like (24) and (25), dependent on the content of the complement clause, can contain the speaker's or writer's perspective too (cf. Verhagen 2005, 104–110). As such, this contribution also illustrates how linguistic knowledge and (political) discourse analysis can enhance each other. Applying linguistic knowledge about grammatical phenomena can yield interesting results for the analysis of political discourse; at the same time, analysis of political discourse is a means for refining our insights into the nature of grammatical phenomena.

[19]For the analysis of Dutch, parsers like Frog (Van den Bosch et al. 2007) or Alpino (Van Noord 2006) are available online. See, respectively, http://ilk.uvt.nl/frog/ and http://www.let.rug.nl/vannoord/alp/Alpino/.

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