

Towards an explanation of certain that-*t* phenomena: The COMP-node in Bavarian*

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Introduction

In this paper an attempt is made to trace back to some minimal parametrical variations some major syntactic differences between Standard German (SG) and Bavarian (B), the variety of German spoken in the south-east of West-Germany. My main concern is to arrive at an explanation for the violations of the *that-*t* filter which occur frequently in B. The Government and Binding framework, as developed in Chomsky (1981) offers a theory which allows us to derive the Bavarian *daß-t* phenomena and certain cases of pro-drop without stipulations.

1. Extractability

Linguists dealing with German syntax are sometimes puzzled by the fact that there is a great deal of variation among speakers as far as extraction from finite clauses is concerned. Both the examples in (1) are impossible in the usage of rigid German "non-extractors":

- (1) (a) *Wen_i glaubst du [daß Emma t_i liebt]
 who believe you that E. loves
 "Who do you believe that Emma loves?"
 (b) *Wer_i glaubst du [daß t_i Emma liebt]
 "Who do you believe loves Emma?"

The corresponding Bavarian sentences in (2) are perfectly grammatical:

- (2) (a) Weam_i moanstn [daß da Franz t_i troffa hot]
 who think-you that the F. met has
 "Who do you think that Franz has met?"
 (b) Wea_i moanstn [daß t_i an Franz troffa hot]
 "Who do you think has met Franz?"

The problem does not seem to have to do with the *that-*t* filter directly, because SG reacts to both subject- and object-extraction negatively, whereas B seems to be quite happy with violations of the Empty Category Principle (ECP), which says that an empty category should be properly governed.¹ According to this principle, (1a) should be fine, because the verb *liebt* properly governs the trace, whereas (2b) should be bad, because the trace is not governed by an X⁰-element and not coindexed in an immediately perspicuous way. Why then are the data as they are?

2. COMP in Bavarian

B provides impressive examples of doubly-filled COMP. As a rule, any finite embedded clause may be introduced with two COMP-positions. This holds, of course, also for relative clauses. My examples indicate that the complementizers *daß* (for V-complementation) and *wo* (for N-complementation) may be missing, but in fact there are many speakers who almost never leave them away:

- (3) (a) I woäß ned [wann_i (daß) [da Xavea t_i kummt]]
I know not when that the X. comes
“I don’t know when Xaver will arrive”
(b) Es is no ned g’wieß [wea_i (daß) [t_i kummt]]
it is yet not sure who that comes
“It is not yet sure who will come”
(c) dea Hund [dea_i (wo) [t_i gestern d’Katz bissn hot]]
the dog which that yesterday the cat bitten has
“the dog which has bitten the cat yesterday”
(d) de Frau [dea_i (wo) [da Xavea t_i a Bussl g’gem hot]]
the woman to-who that the X. a kiss given has
“the woman who Xaver has kissed”

Before I turn to a problem with Bavarian relative clauses let me indicate how the ungrammaticality of (1) can be derived. SG, as spoken by non-extractors, has one and only one COMP. Therefore, (1a) is not rejected, because the trace left in object-position would be ungoverned (it is governed), but rather because COMP is already occupied by *daß*. The *w*-word simply cannot escape, because the usual escape-hatch, a \emptyset -COMP, is blocked by a complementizer-word.

A first question about relatives is why many speakers would express (3c) with the relative pronoun missing rather than leaving out *wo*: (3c) *dea Hund [wo [e gestern d’Katz bissn hot]]*

This is strange, because now there is no antecedent for *e*. Assuming that *e* = PRO is unmotivated, since in (3c) there was much reason to argue that it was a *w*-trace.² On the other hand, the relative pronoun in (3d) cannot be left out. The result would be ungrammatical. Since deletion of the

relative pronoun in COMP leads always to ungrammaticality if the pronoun is not in the Nominative, we can formulate the following principle:

- (4) *Unmarked-Case Transmission* (UCT)³
[COMP \bar{X}_i] [COMP wo] → [COMP \bar{X}_i] [COMP wo_i]
where *i* = the unmarked Case (i.e. Nominative)

There is a slight complication which, however, does not affect (4). Note that we can render a relative without a non-Nominative pronoun grammatical, if the head of the relative has the same Case as the deleted pronoun:

- (5) (a) I sog’s dem Mõ [wo [des e g’heat]] ned
I tell-it to the man that this belongs-to not
“I won’t tell it to the man to whom this belongs”
(b) *I kenn den Mõ [wo [des e g’heat]] ned
“I don’t know the man to whom this belongs”

In (5a) the head-NP *dem Mõ* is a Dative; and the Dative is required for a pronoun in \bar{A} -position to fill the gap *e* in the clause, because *gehört* governs a Dative-object; in (5b) the head is in the Accusative; therefore there is a Case conflict between Dative and Accusative. We can account for this situation with the following principle:

- (6) *General Case Transmission* (GCT)
[NP_j] [COMP \bar{X}] [COMP wo] → [NP_j] [COMP \bar{X}] [COMP wo_j]
where *j* = any Case; $\bar{X} = \emptyset$.

If an optional deletion rule deletes the pronoun which precedes *wo*, the head-NP has a chance to transmit its Case onto *wo*, rendering some sentences grammatical and others not.⁴ The ungrammatical examples would be ruled out by Case-theory. (5ab) have to be analyzed as:

- (7) (a) I sog’s [dem Mõ_j] [\bar{S} [COMP \emptyset] [COMP wo_j] [\bar{S} des t_i g’heat]]]
ned where *i* = *j*
(b) *I kenn [den Mõ_j] [\bar{S} [COMP \emptyset] [COMP wo_j] [\bar{S} des t_i g’heat]]]
ned where *i* ≠ *j*

To sum up, the N-complementizer *wo* can inherit the feature [+nominative] from a moved and later on deleted Nominative pronoun, such that no ECP-violation occurs if we face a *wo-t* structure. In any other situation the grammaticality depends on the coincidence of head-Case and the Case of the deleted pronoun.

3. Full Pronouns and Clitics

Now I want to draw attention to the fact that a syntax dilemma arises when we follow certain historically oriented descriptions of the Bavarian clitic (Nominative) pronouns. The lists of full and clitic pronouns (8) and (9) are taken from Altmann.

(8) Full Pronouns/Nominative⁵

	singular		plural	
	Bavarian	Stand.German	Bavarian	Stand.German
1 pers.	i:	ich	mia	wir
2 pers.	du	du	ia/e:s	ihr
3 pers.	ea/dea si/de es/des	er sie es	si/de	sie

(9) Clitic Pronouns/Nominative

	singular		plural	
	Bavarian	Stand.German	Bavarian	Stand.German
1 pers	-a/-e	∅	-ma	-wa
2 pers	-s(t)	-de	-(t)s	-a
3 pers	-a -s -s	-a -se -s	-s	-se

Note now the following examples of the movement of the subject pronoun into the second COMP:

- (10) (a) [_S [COMP i:] [COMP bis daß] [_S t kumm]] is d'Suppn
 I until that come is the soup
 schõ koid
 already cold
 "Until I arrive the soup will already be cold"
 (b) [_S [COMP du] [COMP bis daß] [_S-st kummst]] ...
 (c) [_S [COMP dea] [COMP bis daß] [_S t kummt]] ...
 (d) [_S [COMP mia] [COMP bis daß] [_S t kumma]] ...
 (e) [_S [COMP ia/e:s] [COMP bis daß] [_S-ts kummts]] ...
 (f) [_S [COMP de] [COMP bis daß] [_S t kumma]] ...

There is no clear picture of a syntactic process. Why should a clitic pronoun remain in the S-clause, if it is 2nd person? Note further that the same thing would lead to ungrammaticality in all the other persons:

- (11) (a) *i: bis daß [_S-e kumm] is d'Suppn schõ koid
 (b) *dea bis daß [_S-a kummt] is d'Suppn schõ koid

Another reason for not being content with the present analysis has to do with phonology. I assume that clitic pronouns should derive in an

immediately perspicuous way from the corresponding full pronouns. This seems to be the case for all the forms but for the 2nd person forms. I have to emphasize again that I do not make any claims which touch the historical development.⁶ Among the forms in (8) and (9) it should not be too difficult to derive, say, /s/ from /si/, /ma/ from /mia/ etc., but it would be difficult to derive in synchronic phonology /st/ from /du/ and /ts/ from /e:s/.⁷

To summarize, we have – as (10) indicates – an inconsistent syntax, and we have a doubtful phonology, but we have nice tables of the pronominal paradigm where every full form has a corresponding clitic. My claim is that it is neither the syntax nor the phonology of B which is messy, but table (9). Looking at the verb forms in (10b/e) it appears immediately that *-st/-ts* are the personal endings on the verb. Therefore I hypothesize that they are not clitics in subject-position, but rather inflections on COMP. This is the reason why they cannot disappear under conditions of movement.⁸

4. Pro-Drop

Note now that in (10b/e), which are now respectively analyzed as (12a/b)

- (12) (a) [du [bis daß-st] [t kummst]] is d'Suppn schõ koid
 (b) [ia/e:s [bis daß-ts] [t kummts]] is d'Suppn schõ koid

the subject pronouns *du* and *ia/e:s* can be dropped. In that case it is unlikely that movement takes place at all. In all the other examples where we had a movement analysis already in (10), pro-drop leads to ungrammaticality. Leaving away the inflectional morphology in COMP in (12) again rules out the sentences as unacceptable. Without even approaching a more sophisticated level of argumentation we can conclude from the way the data pattern that there must be an intimate connection between the make-up of COMP and the adjacent empty element to the right of it. B "becomes" a pro-drop language just in case COMP is inflectionally enriched to such an extent that the referential properties of the governed empty element can be recovered. Although *-st/-ts* are not clitic pronouns, they have the quality to specify COMP in the relevant way. What kind of empty element is *e* in this case? Since there is no antecedent, I assume it not to be a wh-trace.⁹ As there is no sentence-level controller, it cannot be PRO. A more relevant reason which rules out PRO and PRO_{arb} is that PRO would appear in governed position. This will become clear in the next section.

5. Are there ECP-Violations in Bavarian?

I will show now that empty subjects are properly governed in the sense of Chomsky (1981). The ECP reads as follows:¹⁰

- (13) *ECP*
 $[\alpha e]$ must be properly governed
- (14) α properly governs β iff (i) α governs β and [(ii) $\alpha = [\pm N, \pm V]^0$ or (iii) α is coindexed with β]

If we generalize our principle UCT in (4) a little bit, we can account for the transmission of Unmarked Case in all clauses introduced by a complementizer:

- (4') *Generalized UCT*
 $[\text{COMP } \bar{X}_i] [\text{COMP complementizer}] \rightarrow [\text{COMP } X_i] [\text{COMP complementizer}_i]$ where $i = \text{the Unmarked Case}$; X may be trace

(4') guarantees that the index of trace is transmitted onto the complementizer, if the moved element is in the Nominative. For example in

- (15) $\overline{S} [\text{COMP}_1 t_i] [\overline{S} [\text{COMP } da\beta] [S t_i VP]]$

daß inherits index i and can therefore properly govern t_i . As far as I can see, (4') and (6) can handle some important problems of abstract Case in B.

We have accounted for the situation where a subject-trace is properly governed. In the light of data where subject *pro*-drop can only occur if a defined morphology appears in COMP, it is evident that this morphology is the trigger for (optional) *pro*-drop. Since the morphology in question consists of the 2nd person verb-affixes, we might argue that there is a correspondence-feature which links INFL and COMP:

- (16) $\dots [\text{COMP}_1 \alpha 2 \text{ person}] [S \dots [\text{INFL } \alpha 2 \text{ person}] \dots]$
- (17) $\begin{array}{l} [+ 2 \text{ person/sg}] \rightarrow /-st/ \\ [+ 2 \text{ person/pl}] \rightarrow /-ts/ \\ [- 2 \text{ person}] \rightarrow /-\emptyset/ \end{array} \left/ \right. [\text{COMP}_1 \text{---}]$

A complementizer which attracts verbal morphology in such a way can readily be assumed to be a lexical governor.¹¹ If this holds, the ECP is fulfilled without stipulations on proper government: In B empty categories are properly governed either (a) because they are traces governed by a verb which is $[-N, +V]$, fulfilling (ii) of (14), or (b) because they are subject-traces governed due to GUCT (= (4')), fulfilling (iii) of (14), or (c) because they are base-generated empty elements which are governed by an enriched complementizer, which might be $[+INFL]$, fulfilling again (ii) of (14). Under this analysis it is evident why PRO and PRO_{arb} do not qualify. They would be governed by COMP. Rather, the empty element following a governing COMP seems to have all the properties Chomsky ascribes to *pro*.¹²

6. Where is INFL?

There are competing theories as to where INFL is in German. The most frequent proposals are: (I) INFL is directly dominated by S;¹³ (II) INFL is directly dominated by VP.¹⁴ The following Bavarian data are graphically arranged to make my point clear:¹⁵

- (18) (a) \emptyset wenn-ts *pro* -me mech-ts (If you like me, ...)
 (b) \emptyset mech-ts *pro* -me (Do you like me?)
 (c) wen_i mech-ts *pro* t_i (Who do you like?)
 (d) mi_i wenn-ts *pro* t_i mech-ts (If you like ME, ...)
 (e) $warum_i$ daß-ts *pro* -me t_i mech-ts (... why you like me)
 (f) \emptyset warum_i-ts *pro* -me t_i mech-ts (... why you like me)

One can see that the finite verb *mech-ts* can also govern *pro*. The problem with proposal (I) is that it predicts

- (19) **pro* (ia/e:s) mi mech-ts
 you me like
 "You like me"

to be a well-formed declarative sentence: If INFL is immediately dominated by S, it should under the required conditions allow for prodrop. This prediction is wrong. The advantage of (I) is, however, that there is a solution for Nominative-assignment. Proposal (II) predicts correctly that (19) is ungrammatical, because INFL being part of the maximal projection VP cannot govern *pro*. Beyond this, (II) gives at least the idea of an explanation for V/2 in German: (19) may be freely generated by \bar{X} -syntax. The nature of *pro* and the presence of an appropriate landing site for V/INFL in COMP₁ could then be seen to be the trigger for V/INFL-movement.¹⁶ The problem of assigning Case to the subject-NP that (I) could solve seems to be a "Scheinproblem". If we assume – as Chomsky has once proposed – that $[+nominative]$ is an abstract property of finite sentences (if there is a phonological matrix where the feature can be spelt out) we can capture the fact that in V/end-sentences the subject-NP has Case without being governed by AGR:

- (20)

Here, INFL does not govern NP₁. NP₁ gets Case by virtue of being the subject of a finite clause. It might be governed by some percolation mechanism in the sense of Safir (1982). If INFL is marked [+2 person] it acquires the feature [+pronominal];¹⁷ after movement to COMP₁ it can properly govern *pro*. In V/end-sentences with an overt complementizer or a *wh*-moved element in COMP₁ agreement-rule (16) guarantees that COMP₁ becomes [+pronominal]. Ungrammatical examples like

- (21) **pro* mech-ts -me ned
 "You don't like me"

are now ruled out: If *pro* were in COMP₂ of (20), it could not be governed by INFL. *pro* could, however, be moved to COMP₂, leaving a trace which would be properly governed by *mech-ts*.¹⁸ Is then (21) ruled in again? I think it is not, because *pro* might be argued to move into an \bar{A} -position, consequentially binding the trace non-locally. Semantically it is unclear how an undetermined element like *pro* could serve as a binder of a *wh*-trace. Without doubt, there is a superior solution which might be achieved with a deeper understanding of German syntax.

7. Conclusion

The results of this study of COMP in B are: It was shown that the ECP holds in B. It followed quite naturally from the fact that B has doubly-filled COMP (or rather two COMP-positions), a general rule of Case-transmission which percolates the Nominative in form of an abstract index onto an otherwise unmarked complementizer-word, and the fact that B has a somewhat more vivid morphology than SG. An important fact is that in 2nd person COMP acquires inflectional morphology. This enables COMP to properly govern an empty pronominal in an adjacent subject-position. At the same time we could avoid the strange effect of B's allowing for pronoun-doubling and *wh*-movement irregularly. With the present account we could also avoid difficulties which arise in synchronic phonology of B, when the pseudo-clitics should be derived from the full pronouns.

Although B seems to be a dialect which is quite different from SG, we could show that an important subset of the syntactic differences which any naive observer can notice, is explained on the basis of a few parametrical variations. The differences between B and SG I focused on in this study arise mainly, because the dialect of strict "non-extractors" has only one COMP. If this COMP is blocked by e.g. *daß*, the following sentence is closed for movement. Since German observes Subjacency, it is obvious why under such conditions COMP-to-COMP-movement cannot take place. In B, on the other hand, one can observe all effects of long *wh*-movement, because there is room for trace and a complementizer. COMP-

inflection makes it possible to drop 2nd person pronouns, – a process which is unknown in SG.

B gives an example of what Chomsky in Chomsky (1981) suspects to be a language with a "mixed system", i.e. a language where subject-drop does not occur regularly, but only in some constructions.¹⁹

Notes

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1. Carl Bremer (personal communication) and Van der Auwera (this volume) in his U6 suggest that (universally) subjects are harder to move out of their clauses than non-subjects. According to Van der Auwera, this property should be linked to the fact that the semantic role of subject NP's is less predictable than that of non-subject-NP's. Therefore, subjects should be more clause-bound than non-subjects (cf. his U5). I cannot see the force of the argument. Note also German constructions like *Mir ist schlecht*, *Mir geht's gut*, *Mich friert*, *Dem Patienten wird ein Tumor herausoperiert* where the initial Dative/Accusative-NP's are far from roles like "patient" or "recipient". In the light of the advanced research on the ECP I doubt that much can be gained from semantic and functional considerations in this area. Bavarian indicates that there is no prima facie asymmetry in German between subject- and object-NP's. I doubt that a quantitative study of overall German would contradict that. For "properly governed" see Fn. 10.

2. A more serious reason is that in other cases PRO would be governed. This is not an available option in the framework I am following.

3. This rule is inspired by the *que*→*qui*-rule in Pesetsky (1982). There are good reasons to consider the Nominative to be the Unmarked Case. It is, for example, the Case of quotation, it is free of special morphology, it appears in infinitival constructions, if there is no element which could assign another Case. Agrammatism gives psycholinguistic evidence in support of my view.

4. Some native speakers get very confused with pure *wo*-relatives in metalinguistic decision. They either tend to reject all the examples or to accept all of them, including the ungrammatical ones. I follow my own intuitions and Merkle (1975), p. 148f.

5. Note that 2nd person plural has *e:s* which is an old dualis form. In 3rd person there is no clear distinction made between ordinary and demonstrative pronouns.

6. For historical descriptions see Weinhold (1867) and Schatz (1907).

7. Hans den Besten (personal communication) doubts that in cases like *wenn-st kumm-st* (if you come) COMP lacks a pronoun completely. He thinks that the proper analysis would be something like *wenn-s-t kumm-st*, where *-t* is a residual of *du*, the full pronoun. For other German dialects this might be appropriate, e.g. Berlinerisch *wenn-s-te*. Note, however, the following distribution of grammaticality in the two dialects:

- | | | | |
|------|--------------------------|---|--------------|
| (i) | (a) wenn-st kumm-st | } | Bavarian |
| | (b) wenn-st du kumm-st | | |
| (ii) | (a) wenn-s-te kumm-st | } | Berlinerisch |
| | (b) *wenn-s-te du kommst | | |

These data indicate that *wennste* is a COMP-?-clitic structure, whereas *wennst* is an inflected

COMP. Only the latter tolerates a following full pronoun. Of course, this claim does not extend to a historical theory.

8. With this view I am not alone. Pfalz (1918) proposed an analysis along these lines. See also Kufner (1961) as well as Richter (1979), where other dialects and languages are mentioned which show agreement phenomena in COMP. Bennis/Haegeman (this volume) in dealing mainly with West-Flemish, develop an account according to which clitics in general are not more than feature carriers, i.e. agreement phenomena without referential force. But also in their data one finds indications that certain elements derive from the verb, whereas others derive from the pronoun, e.g. *danck (ik) kommen* (that I come), *dāze (zunder) kommen* (that they come), where $-k < ik$, $-ze < zunder$, but $[+nasal] < -n$ in *kommen*. Bennis and Haegeman show that there is a trade-off in West-Flamish between *pro* (this is the "little" *pro*, not PRO; see Chomsky (1982), §5, and the feature-load of the governor of *pro*. It was suggested to me to handle the Bavarian data similarly. The reason not to do that is simply that in B the inflectional morphology in COMP is purely verbal, whereas the clitics attached to COMP are purely pronominal. This is again readily demonstrated by the fact that unlike West-Flemish, B does not at all tolerate strings of the form COMP-clitic_i-pronoun_i. The status of clitics as pronouns is here fully preserved.

9. One could imagine that the antecedent was deleted in the derivational process. I would require more space to argue against such a solution.

10. see Chomsky (1981), p. 250; the other relevant definitions follow Bennis/Groos (1982). Important for the present discussion are:

α governs β iff (i) α minimally c-commands β

α minimally governs β iff (i) α c-commands β , (ii) $\sim \exists \gamma [(\alpha \text{ c-commands } \gamma) \& (\gamma \text{ c-commands } \beta) \& \sim (\gamma \text{ c-commands } \alpha)]$

11. Richter who calls complementizers like *daß* "Partikel", which means something like "uninflecting word", refers to this as a process of "Departikularisierung"; cf. Richter (1979), p. 536.

12. Cf. Chomsky (1982), §5, where *pro* is defined as [-anaphor, +pronominal]; *pro* is the natural consequence of "richer" inflectional systems, i.e. a governed pronominal without a phonological matrix whose content is fully determined by a governing AGR-element. See also Bennis/Haegeman (this volume).

13. E.g. Safir (1982).

14. Most native grammarians.

15. In all the places of (18) where *pro* appears, the full pronoun *ia* of 2nd person/plural is also possible.

16. See also Chomsky (1982), p. 85; Chomsky would rather leave the exact nature of the empty category to be determined by move- α and the interaction of the various subtheories. For a recent critique of assuming COMP-positions for all three sentence-types of German (V/end, V/1, V/2) see Reis (1983). Personally I have no qualms about giving up the cover term "COMP" for cases where no overt or \emptyset -complementizer is required.

17. See Rizzi (1982).

18. Note example (106) in Chomsky (1982) *e fu arrestato t* (he was arrested), where $e = pro$. Such cases of NP-movement would turn out in Bavarian (in 2nd person) to be grammatical as well, e.g. *daß-ts pro eig'schbeat wea-ts* (that you will be arrested).

19. Chomsky (1981), p. 241.