

Case attraction in headless relatives

Fenna Bergsma

February 20, 2020

Contents

Contents	2
1 Introduction	5
1.1 Explaining the title	5
1.1.1 Case attraction	5
1.1.2 Headless relatives	6
1.2 Three topics	7
1.2.1 Case complexity	7
1.2.2 Direction of attraction	7
1.2.3 Prepositions	7
2 Case complexity	9
2.1 The pattern	9
2.2 Background: case hierarchy theory, nano theory	9
2.3 Analysis	9
2.4 Bigger picture	9
3 Direction of attraction	11
3.1 Typology	11
3.1.1 Gothic	11
3.1.2 Old High German	11
3.1.3 Modern German	13
3.2 Background: relative clause theory	13
3.3 Shape of relative pronoun	13
3.4 Analysis	13
3.4.1 Old High German	13
3.4.2 Modern German	14
3.4.3 Gothic	14
3.5 No attraction	14
3.6 Bigger picture	14
4 Prepositions	17
4.1 Headless relatives and prepositions	17
4.2 R-pronouns	17
4.3 Bigger picture	17

<i>CONTENTS</i>	3
5 Conclusion	19
Bibliography	21

Chapter 1

Introduction

The topic of this thesis is case attraction in headless relative clauses. First I talk about the role of case in language. Second I discuss regular headed relative clauses and how they handle case. Third I introduce a phenomenon called case attraction in headed relative clause. Finally, I get to headless relative clauses that show case attraction.

1.1 Explaining the title

1.1.1 Case attraction

Languages can use case to mark the grammatical role of a noun phrase in a clause. Consider the two Modern German sentences in (1). In (1a), *der Lehrer* ‘the teacher’ is marked nominative, and it is the subject. *Den Schüler* ‘the student’ is marked accusative, and it is an object. In (1b), the roles are reversed: *der Schüler* ‘the student’ is marked nominative and it is the subject, and *den Lehrer* ‘the teacher’ is marked accusative and it is the object. Notice also that the subject precedes the predicate *mag* ‘likes’ and the object follows it.

- (1) a. Der Lehrer mag den Schüler.
 the.M.NOM teacher likes the.M.ACC student
 ‘The teacher likes the student.’
 b. Der Schüler mag den Lehrer.
 the.M.NOM student likes the.M.ACC
 ‘The student likes the teacher.’

Not only full noun phrases, but also other elements can be marked for case, such relative pronouns. Modern German marks relative pronouns, just like full noun phrases, for the grammatical role they have in the clause. Consider the two sentences in (2). In (2a), the relative pronoun *der* ‘that.M.NOM’ introduces a clause that modifies *den Schüler* ‘the student’. *Der* ‘that.M.NOM’ is marked masculine and nominative. The relative pronoun is marked masculine, because it agrees in gender with its antecedent *den Schüler* ‘the student’. It is marked nominative, because of its grammatical role: it is the subject in the relative clause. In (2b), the relative pronoun *den* ‘that.M.ACC’ is

marked masculine and accusative. Again, the relative pronoun is marked masculine, because it agrees in gender with its antecedent *den Schüler* ‘the student’. It is marked accusative, because of its grammatical role: it is the object in the relative clause.

- (2) a. Der Lehrer mag den Schüler, der nach draußen
 the.M.NOM teacher likes the.M.ACC student that.M.NOM to outside
 guckt.
 looks
 ‘The teacher likes the student that is looking outside.’
 b. Der Lehrer mag den Schüler, den er beim
 the.M.NOM teacher likes the.M.ACC student that.M.ACC he at the
 Verstecktspiel sucht.
 hide-and-seek game seeks
 ‘The teacher likes the student that he is looking for playing hide-and-
 seek.’

–from here on it still needs working out–

This pattern occurs in German, most other modern languages. In some ancient languages the relative pronoun did not take the case of the grammatical role in its own clause. Instead, it agrees in case with its antecedent. This is called case attraction. The relative pronoun is attracted to its antecedent(?).

- (3) sie gedâht’ ouch maniger leide, der ir dâ héimé
 she thought_{GEN} also some.GEN sufferings.GEN which.GEN her at home
 geschach.
 happened_{NOM}
 ‘She thought about some misfortunes that happened to her at home’ attraction
 headed relative

there is a generalization here: more complex case wins. maybe don’t mention that here yet.

1.1.2 Headless relatives

So far I discussed headed relatives. Headless relatives also exist. The antecedent is missing. We also observe case attraction there. It is less easy to see because the antecedent NP is missing, but we know what’s going on because of the case requirements of the predicates. So this actually means is that the relative pronoun takes the case from the main clause (where normally the antecedent was). This is called proper attraction.

- (4) Aer antuurta demo zaimo sprah.
 he replied_{DAT} who.DAT to him spoke_{NOM}
 ‘He replied to the one who spoke to him.’ proper attraction headless relative

1.2 Three topics

Here comes the introduction to a part that discusses three problems. These problems are what I will discuss in my dissertation. What will be here is connecting these problems to the real world. Why do we care about these? What are these problems going to inform us about?

1.2.1 Case complexity

case attraction always follows the hierarchy

1.2.2 Direction of attraction

case attraction can go two ways

- (5) Aer antuurta demo zaimo sprah.
 he replied_{DAT} who.DAT to him spoke_{NOM}
 'He replied to the one who spoke to him.' proper attraction headless relative
- (6) Ich lade ein, wem Maria vertraut.
 I invite_{ACC} who.DAT also Maria trusts_{DAT}
 'I invite whoever Maria also trusts.' invserse attraction headless relative

the morphology of the relative pronouns decides which one is possible

1.2.3 Prepositions

and r-pronouns

Chapter 2

Case complexity

2.1 The pattern

Illustrate complexity with Gothic

2.2 Background: case hierarchy theory, nano theory

also argue against scott grimm? or add to it

2.3 Analysis

No syntax of relative clauses yet, just "when one contains the other, the contained one can be deleted"

2.4 Bigger picture

Case is complex

Chapter 3

Direction of attraction

3.1 Typology

Old High German only has proper attraction. Modern German only has inverse attraction. Gothic has both proper and inverse attraction.

Table 3.1: INT vs. EXT in Modern and Old High German and Gothic

	INT>EXT inverse attraction	EXT>INT proper attraction
Modern German	✓	*
Old High German	*	✓
Gothic	✓	✓

3.1.1 Gothic

3.1.2 Old High German

(1) EXT:GEN, INT:NOM

- a. suachit thes nan sentit
search.3.SG_{GEN?} D-N.SG.GEN 3.SG.M.ACC sent
‘he searched for who sent him/ der sucht die Sachen dessen der ihn
sendet’ (Old High German, Otfrid III,16,21, Behaghel 1923-1932, p. 761)
- b. diu habe niemer niht entuot, des der seele schaden si
they have not never not do D-GEN.SG.N the soul damage is_[NOM]
‘’ (Middle High German, Warn. 2490, Behaghel 1923-1932, p. 761)

(2) EXT:DAT, INT:NOM

- a. Aer antuurta demo zaimo sprah.
he replied_[DAT] D-M.SG.DAT to him spoke_[NOM]
‘He replied to the one who spoke to him.’ (Old High German, Monsee
Fragments 7,24, Behaghel 1923-1932, p. 761)

- b. gebe themo ni eigi
 give_[DAT] D-M.SG.DAT not posses_[NOM]
 ‘give to whom that does not have’ gebe dem der nicht hat (Old High German, Otfrid I,24,77, Schrod,175)
- (3) EXT:ACC, INT:NOM
- a. ih bibringu fona Juda dhen mina berga
 I educate von Juda D-M/N/F.PL.DAT/M.SG.ACC my? mountain
 chisetzit
 order/put
 ‘ (Old High German, Isidor 34,3, Behaghel 1923-1932, p. 761)
- (4) EXT:GEN, INT:ACC
- a. der bewiset in des er suochte
 he directed_[GEN] him D-N.SG.GEN he sought_[ACC]
 ‘He directed him to what he sought.’ (Middle High German, Iwein 988, Behaghel 1923-1932, p. 761), trans. Hartmann von Aue-Portal
- b. giwisso ni birut ir thero ih irwellu zi mir
 bestimmt not belong_[GEN] 2.PL.NOM D-GEN.PL I choose_[ACC] to me
 ‘you surely do not belong to those that I choose for myself //sicherlich gehört ihr nicht zu denen die ich mir erwähle’ (Old High German, Otfrid III,22,20, Schrod,175)
- (5) EXT:DAT, INT:ACC
- a. istû furira Abrâhame, ouh then man hiar nû
 are you superior to_[DAT] Abraham also D-D.PL one here now
 zalta?
 mentioned_[ACC]
 ‘are you bigger than Abraham and those people named just now?’ (Old High German, Otfrid III,18,33, Behaghel 1923-1932, p. 761)
- (6) EXT:GEN, INT:DAT
- Don’t know:
- (7) Old High German
- a. gaat uz diu halt za dem iz forchaufent
 ‘ (Old High German, Monsee Fragments 20,14, Behaghel 1923-1932, p. 761)
- b. thisiu fon thiu, iru wan ist, siu alla iru libnara santa (ex eo, quod)
 ‘hæc autem ex eo quod deest illi, totum victum suum quem habuit misit.’ (Old High German, Tatian 118,1, Behaghel 1923-1932, p. 761)
- c. thaz iru thiu sin guati nirzigi, thes siu bati
 ‘ (Old High German, Otfrid II,8,24, Behaghel 1923-1932, p. 761)

d. thia laz ih themo iz lisit thar

“ (Old High German, Otfrid I,19,25, Behaghel 1923-1932, p. 761)

e. noh so neduohti in gnuoge des si habetin

“ (Old High German, Notker I,63,29, Behaghel 1923-1932, p. 761)

f. tannoh pito ih tes noh fore ist (id quod)

“ (Old High German, Notker 193,19, Behaghel 1923-1932, p. 761)

So, to sum up:

Table 3.2: Case attraction in headless relatives in Old High German

INT EXT	[NOM]	[ACC]	[DAT]	[GEN]
[NOM]	NOM	*ACC *NOM	*DAT *NOM	*GEN *NOM
[ACC]	*NOM ACC	ACC	*DAT *ACC	*GEN *ACC
[DAT]	*NOM DAT	*ACC DAT	DAT	*GEN *DAT
[GEN]	*NOM GEN	*ACC GEN	*DAT GEN	GEN

3.1.3 Modern German

3.2 Background: relative clause theory

Standard raising, probably Cinque's double-headed structures

3.3 Shape of relative pronoun

Old High German has a d-pronoun. Modern German has a wh-pronoun. Gothic has a d-pronoun plus a caseless relativizer.

3.4 Analysis

3.4.1 Old High German

In Old High German, proper attraction in headless relatives can be derived from headed relatives. The relative pronoun is the determiner from the main clause. Under a double-headed Cinque-analysis, it is the internal DP that is deleted.

Table 3.3: INT vs. EXT in Modern and Old High German and Gothic

SG	M	N	F
NOM	dër	daz	diu
ACC	dën	daz	dea, dia (die)
DAT	dëmu, dëmo	dëmu, dëmo	dëru, dëro
GEN	dës	dës	dëra, dëru, dëro
PL	M	N	F
NOM	dē, dea, dia, die	diu, dei	deo, dio
ACC	dē, dea, dia, die	diu, dei	deo, dio
DAT	dēm, dēn	dēm, dēn	dēm, dēn
GEN	dëro	dëro	dëro

- (8) ACC instead of NOM
- a. unde ne wolden nîet besên den mort den dô was
 and not wanted not see the murder.ACC that.ACC there had
 geschên
 happened
 ‘and they didn’t want to see the murder that had happened.’ (Middle High German, Nibelungenlied 1391,14, Behaghel 1923-1932, p. 756, glosses and translation by Pittner 1995, p. 198)

3.4.2 Modern German

In German, inverse attraction in headed relatives can be shown to be very different from inverse attraction in headless relatives. I am not set on an analysis yet. Under a double-headed Cinque-analysis, it is the external DP that is deleted. Grafting is also still an option.

3.4.3 Gothic

In Gothic, ?

3.5 No attraction

Italian has none. Italian uses its free relative pronoun also in light-headed relative pronouns.

3.6 Bigger picture

Relative pronoun is a descriptive term. What we analyze as relative pronouns are sometimes wh-elements, sometimes determiners.

Case attraction is also a descriptive term. The constructions are underlyingly very different.

Chapter 4

Prepositions

4.1 Headless relatives and prepositions

What happens if we analyze prepositions as expressions of case? (And what happens if we do not?)

4.2 R-pronouns

Paper on *waarmee*

4.3 Bigger picture

?

Chapter 5

Conclusion

Bibliography

- Behaghel, Otto (1923-1932). *Deutsche Syntax: Eine geschichtliche Darstellung*. Heidelberg: Winter.
- Pittner, Karin (1995). "The Case of German Relatives". In: *The linguistic review* 12.3, pp. 197-231. doi: 10.1515/tlir.1995.12.3.197.