

Case competition in headless relatives: a Germanic typology

Fenna Bergsma

Goethe-Universität Frankfurt

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Case competition in headless relatives

- **case competition**: a situation in which two cases are assigned but only one of them surfaces
- **headless relative**: a relative clause construction that lacks a head

(1) Ich lade ein wem auch Maria vertraut.
I invite_[ACC] REL.DAT.AN also Maria trusts_[DAT].
'I invite whoever Maria also trusts.'

(Vogel 2001: 344)

The content of my dissertation

- headless relatives in three Germanic languages:
 - Gothic
 - Old High German
 - Modern German
- two aspects:
 - one is stable crosslinguistically
 - one differs crosslinguistically

The crosslinguistically stable one

(2) NOM < ACC < DAT

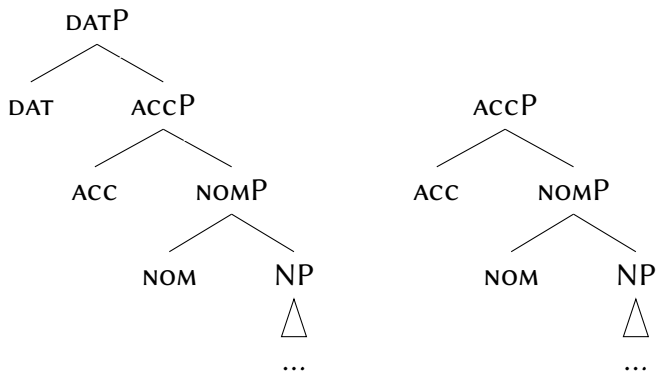
(3) Ich lade ein **wem** auch Maria vertraut.
I invite_[ACC] REL.DAT.AN also Maria trusts_[DAT].
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(Vogel 2001: 344)

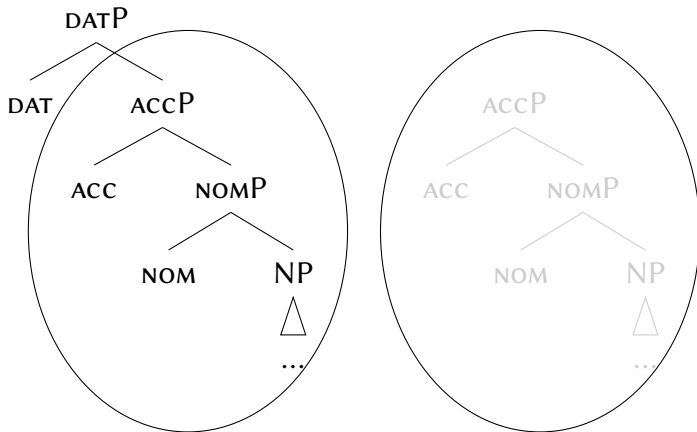
this case scale is not unique to case attraction in headless relatives

- in syntax
 - agreement (cf. Moravcsik, 1978)
 - relativization (cf. Keenan and Comrie, 1977)
- in morphology
 - syncretism patterns (Baerman, Brown, and Corbett, 2005, cf.)
 - formal containment (Caha, 2010, cf.)

A reflex of morphology in syntax



A reflex of morphology in syntax



(Caha, 2009)

The crosslinguistically differing one

- **internal case** refers to the case associated with the relative pronoun internal to the relative clause
- **external case** refers to the case associated with the missing head in the main clause, which is external to the relative clause

	INT>EXT	EXT>INT
Modern German	yes	no
Old High German	no	yes
Gothic	yes	yes

Gothic: both directions

- (4) hva nu wilei ei taujau **þamm** -ei qipib þiudan
what now want that do_[DAT] REL.DAT.M.SG -COMP say_[ACC] king
ludaie?
of Jews
'what now do you wish that I do to (him) whom you call King of the
Jews?' (Gothic, Mark 15:12, adapted from Harbert 1978: 339)
- (5) ushafjands ana **þamm** -ei lag
picking up_[ACC] on_[DAT] REL.DAT.N.SG -COMP lay
'picking up (that) on which he lay'
(Gothic, Luke 5:25, adapted from Harbert 1978: 343)

Modern German: only internal

- (6) *Ich vertraue wem **auch Maria mag.**

I trust_[DAT] REL.DAT.AN also Maria likes_[ACC].

'I trust whoever Maria also likes.'

(Vogel 2001: 345)

- (7) Ich lade ein wem **auch Maria vertraut.**

I invite_[ACC] REL.DAT.AN also Maria trusts_[DAT].

'I invite whoever Maria also trusts.'

(Vogel 2001: 344)

- (8) bistû furira Abrâhame, ouh thên **man hiar nû**
are you older_[DAT] to Abraham also REL.DAT.PL one here now
zalta?
named_[ACC]
'are you really older than Abraham and those who have been
mentioned here?' (OHG, Otfrid III 18:33, Behaghel 1923-1932: 761)

Again a reflex of morphology in syntax?

	headless relatives	
	INT>EXT	EXT>INT
Modern German	yes	no
Old High German	no	yes
Gothic	yes	yes

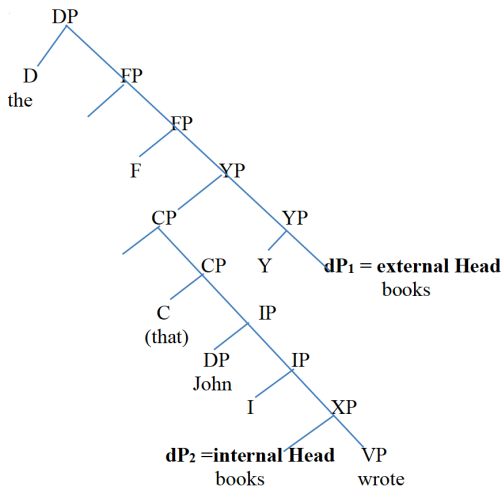
how?

Again a reflex of morphology in syntax?

	headless relatives		relative pronoun
	INT>EXT	EXT>INT	
Modern German	yes	no	WH
Old High German	no	yes	D
Gothic	yes	yes	D + COMP

how?

Cinque's (forthcoming) double-headed analysis



- raising analysis

- amount interpretation: *Had he continued to be dean, he could not have written the books that he wrote.*
- dp_2 moves to specCP and deletes dp_1

- matching analysis

- individual interpretation: *The book that John wrote lies on the shelf.*
- dp_1 moves to specFP and deletes dp_2

The variation explained in a nutshell

- the relative pronoun in Old High German is actually the **external head**
- in Modern German, the relative pronoun **stays** in the relative clause
- Gothic: ?

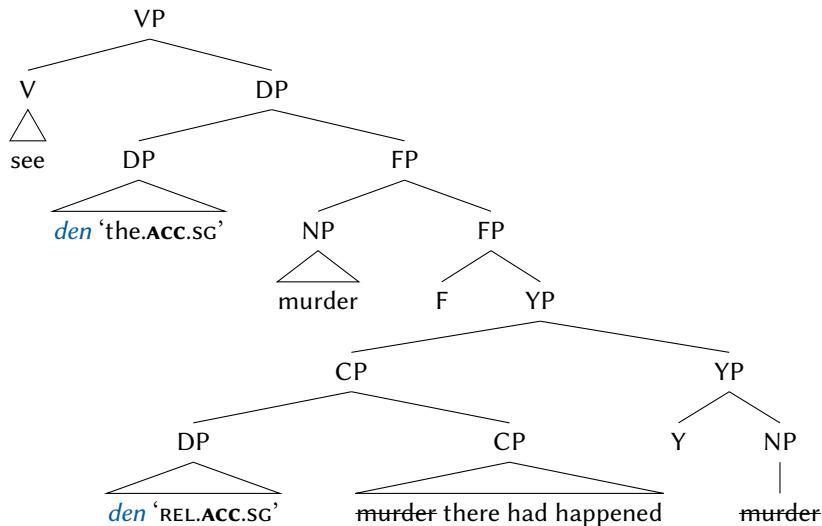
Old High German: attraction in headed relatives

Old High German shows attraction in its **headed** relatives

- (9) unde ne wolden nîet besên den mort den dô
and not wanted not see_[ACC] the.ACC.SG murder REL.ACC.SG there
was geschên
had happened_[NOM]
'and they didn't want to see the murder that had happened.'
(MHG, Nib. 1391,14, Grimm 1866: 319, after Pittner 1995: 198)

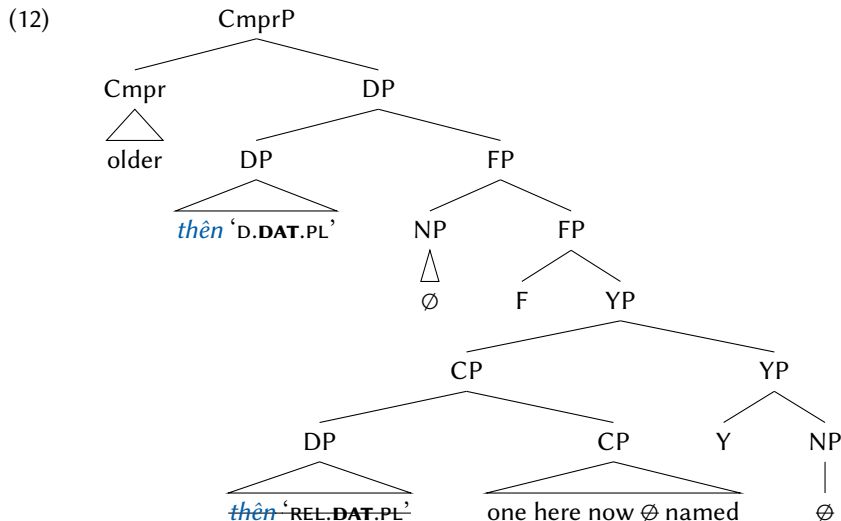
Old High German: structure of headed relative

(10)

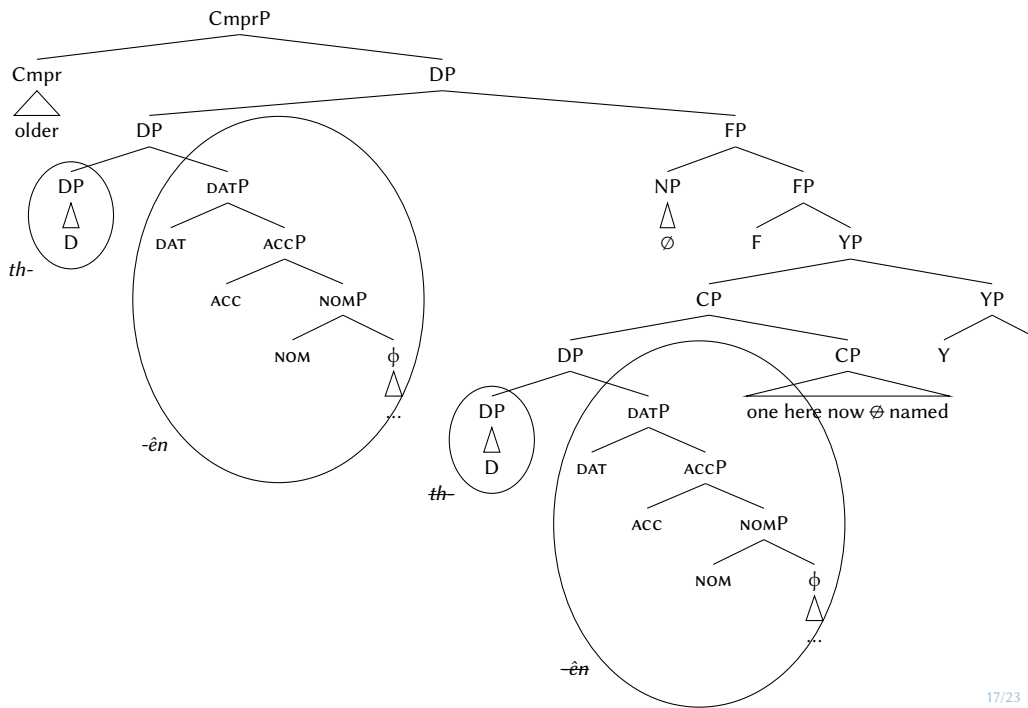


OHG: structure and deletion in headless relatives

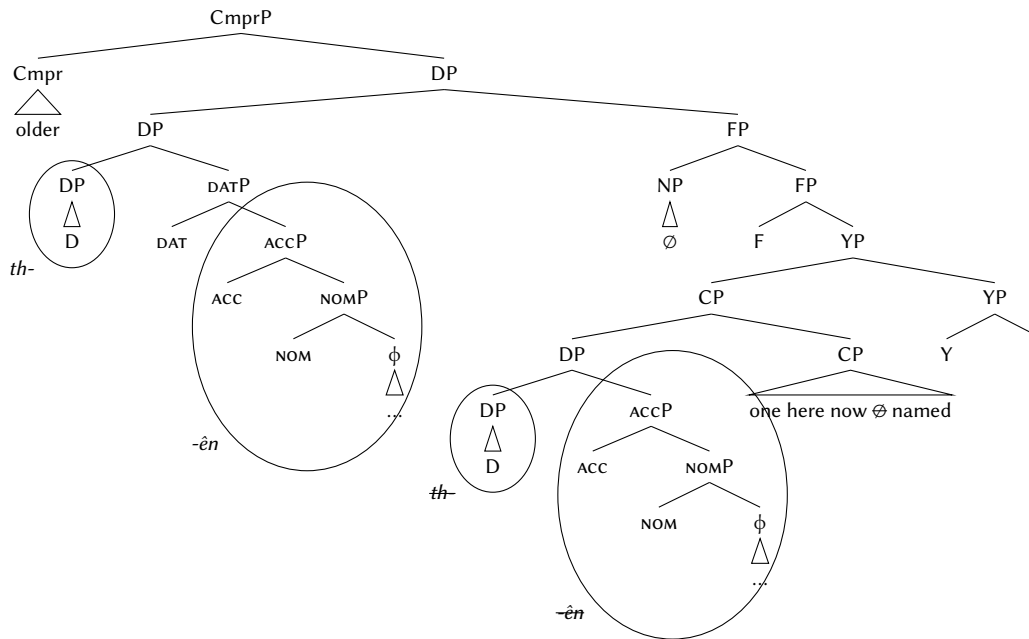
- (11) bistû furira Abrâhame, ouh thên **man hiar nû zalta?**
 are you older_[DAT] to Abraham also REL.DAT.PL one here now named_[ACC]
 ‘are you really older than Abraham and those who have been mentioned here?’
 (OHG, Otfrid III 18:33, Behagel 1923-1932: 761)



OHG: deletion with finer decomposed structures



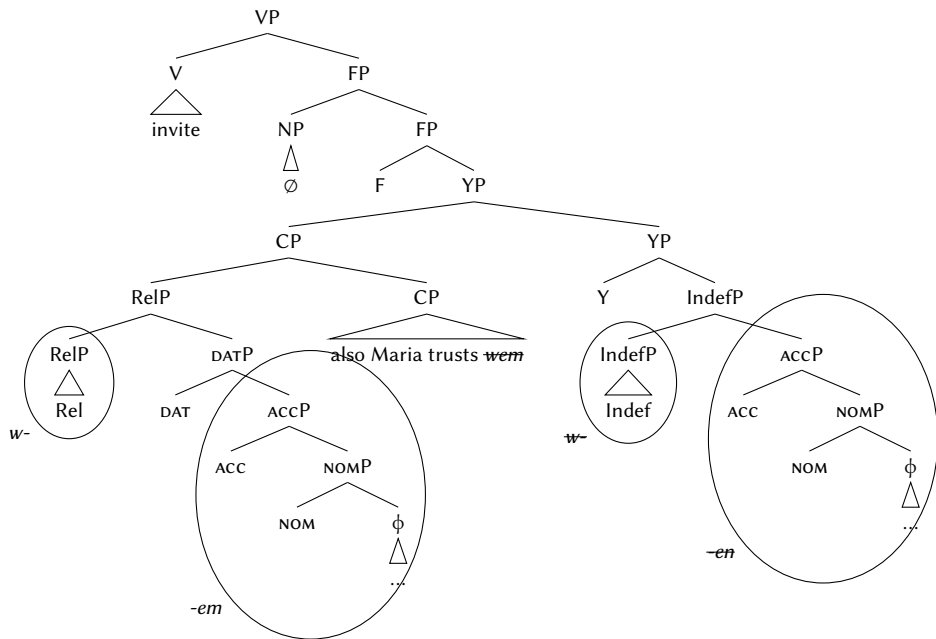
OHG: deletion of a contained constituent



Modern German: also derived from headed?

- (13) Ich lade ein wem auch Maria vertraut.
I invite_[ACC] REL.DAT.AN also Maria trusts_[DAT].
'I invite whoever Maria also trusts.' (Vogel 2001: 344)
- (14) Den schilt den er vür bôt der wart schiere
the.ACC shield.ACC which.ACC he held_{ACC}, that.NOM was quickly
zeslagen
shattered_{NOM}
'The shield he held was quickly shattered' (Middle High German)
- no

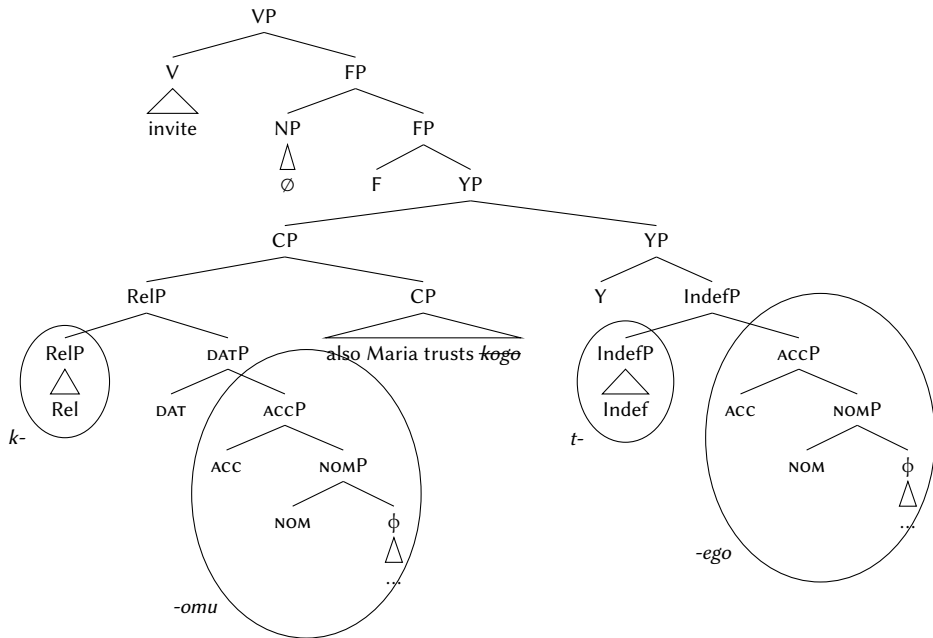
Modern German: matching analysis



Gothic: more questions than answers

- Not like Old High German
 - No attraction in headed relatives
 - Phonological effects with *-ei* > relative pronoun is in the relative clause
- How does the external case end up in the relative clause?

Matching only languages like Polish



References

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