

## Case attraction in headless relatives

Fenna Bergsma

February 17, 2020

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# 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 basics/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<sub>GEN</sub> also some.GEN sufferings.GEN which.GEN her at home  
 geschach.  
 happened<sub>NOM</sub>  
 ‘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<sub>DAT</sub> who.DAT to him spoke<sub>NOM</sub>  
 ‘He replied to the one who spoke to him.’ proper attraction headless relative

## 1.2 Case complexity

case attraction always follows the hierarchy

## 1.3 Direction of attraction

case attraction can go two ways

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

the morphology of the relative pronouns decides which one is possible

## 1.4 Prepositions

and r-pronouns



## **Chapter 2**

# **Case complexity**

### **2.1 The pattern**

Illustrate complexity with Gothic

### **2.2 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. Italian has none.

### 3.2 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. Italian uses its free relative pronoun also in light-headed relative pronouns.

### 3.3 Connecting the two: analysis

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.

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.

In Gothic, ?

In Italian, ?

### 3.4 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

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