

Case attraction in headless relatives

Fenna Bergsma

February 25, 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 The typology	11
3.1.1 Gothic	11
3.1.2 Old High German	12
3.1.3 Modern German	14
3.1.3.1 Grammatical examples	14
3.1.3.2 Ungrammatical examples	15
3.1.3.3 Summary of the data	16
3.2 Background: relative clause theory	16
3.3 Shape of relative pronoun	17
3.3.1 Old High German	17
3.3.2 Gothic	18
3.3.3 Modern German	18
3.4 Analysis	18
3.4.1 Old High German	18
3.4.2 Modern German	19
3.4.3 Gothic	19
3.5 No attraction allowed	19

<i>CONTENTS</i>	3
3.6 Bigger picture	19
4 Prepositions	21
4.1 Headless relatives and prepositions	21
4.2 R-pronouns	21
4.3 Bigger picture	21
5 Conclusion	23
Bibliography	25

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 The 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

- (1) INT:NOM, EXT:ACC
 - a. jah þ-o-ei ist us Laudeikaion jus ussiggwaid
 and D-F.SG.ACC-COMP is_[NOM] from Laodicea you read_[ACC]
 ‘and read that which is from Laodicea’ Colossians 4:16, gloss and
 translation by **harbert1978**
- (2) INT:NOM, EXT:DAT
 - a. þ-aim-ei iupa sind fraþjaiþ
 D-PL.DAT-COMP above are_[NOM] think on_[DAT]
 ‘set your mind on those which are above’ Colossians 3:2, gloss and
 translation by **harbert1978**
- (3) INT:NOM, EXT:GEN
 - a. not attested
- (4) INT:ACC, EXT:NOM

- a. p-an-ei frijos siuks ist
 D-M.SG.ACC-COMP love_[ACC] sick is_[NOM]
 ‘the one whom you love is sick’ John 11:3, gloss and translation by
 harbert1978
- (5) INT:ACC, EXT:DAT
 a. hva nu wileip ei taujaui p-amm-ei qipip piudan Iudaie?
 what now want that do_[DAT] D-M.SG.DAT-COMP say_[ACC] king of Jews
 ‘what now do you wish that I do to him whom you call King of the Jews?’
 Mark 15:12, gloss and translation by **harbert1978**
- (6) INT:ACC, EXT:GEN
 a. ni waiht p-iz-ei gasehvun
 not thing_[GEN] D-N.SG.GEN-COMP saw_[ACC]
 ‘not any of that which they saw’ Luke 9:36, gloss and translation by
 harbert1978
- (7) INT:DAT, EXT:NOM
 a. ip p-amm-ei leiril fraletada leiril frijod
 but D-M.SG.DAT-COMP little is forgiven_[DAT] little loves_[NOM]
 ‘but the one whom little is forgiven loves little’ Luke 7:47, gloss and
 translation by **harbert1978**
- (8) INT:DAT, EXT:ACC
 a. ushafjands ana p-amm-ei lag
 picking up on_[ACC] D-M.SG.DAT-COMP lay_[DAT]
 ‘picking up that on which he lay’ Luke 5:25, gloss and translation by
 harbert1978
- (9) INT:DAT, EXT:GEN
 a. not attested
- (10) INT:GEN, EXT:NOM
 a. not attested
- (11) INT:GEN, EXT:ACC
 a. bugei p-iz-ei paurbeima
 buy_[ACC] D-N.SG.GEN-COMP need_[GEN]
 ‘buy that which we need’ John 13:29, gloss and translation by
 harbert1978
- (12) INT:GEN, EXT:DAT
 a. not attested

3.1.2 Old High German

- (13) EXT:ACC, INT:NOM

Table 3.2: Case attraction in headless relatives in Gothic

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

- a. ih bibringu fona Juda dhen minna 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)

(14) 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)

(15) EXT:DAT, INT:ACC

- a. istu furira Abrahame, ouh then man hiar nu
 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)

(16) 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)

- (17) 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, Schrodtp,175)
- (18) EXT:GEN, INT:DAT

Table 3.3: Case attraction in headless relatives in Old High German

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

3.1.3 Modern German

3.1.3.1 Grammatical examples

- (19) INT:ACC, EXT:NOM
- a. Uns besucht wen Maria mag.
 Us visits_[NOM] W-M/F.SG.ACC Maria.NOM likes_{ACC}
 ‘Who visits us likes Maria likes.’ (vogel2001)
- b. *Uns besucht wer Maria mag.
 Us visits_[NOM] W-M/F.SG.NOM Maria.NOM likes_{ACC}
 ‘Who visits us likes Maria likes.’ (vogel2001)
- (20) INT:DAT, EXT:NOM
- a. Uns besucht wem Maria vertraut.
 us visits_[NOM] W-M/F.SG.DAT Maria trusts_{DAT}
 ‘Who visits us, Maria trusts.’ (vogel2001)
- b. *Uns besucht wer Maria vertraut.
 us visits_[NOM] W-M/F.SG.DAT Maria trusts_{DAT}

- ‘Who visits us, Maria trusts.’ (vogel2001)
- (21) INT:DAT, EXT:ACC
- a. Ich lade ein wem auch Maria vertraut.
 I invite_[ACC] W-M/F.SG.DAT also Maria trusts_{DAT}.
 ‘I invite whoever Maria also trusts.’ (vogel2001)
- b. *Ich lade ein wen auch Maria vertraut.
 I invite_[ACC] W-M/F.SG.ACC also Maria trusts_{DAT}.
 ‘I invite whoever Maria also trusts.’ (vogel2001)
- (22) INT:GEN, EXT:NOM
- a. Uns besucht wessen Maria sich erfreuen würde.
 us visits_[NOM] W-M/F.SG.GEN Maria self be happy_[GEN] would
 ‘Who visits us, Maria would be happy about’ (vogel2001)
- b. *Uns besucht wer Maria sich erfreuen würde.
 us visits_[NOM] W-M/F.SG.NOM Maria self be happy_[GEN] would
 ‘Who visits us, Maria would be happy about’ (vogel2001)
- (23) INT:GEN, EXT:ACC
- a. Ich lade ein, wessen sich auch Maria erfreuen würde.
 I invite_[ACC] W-M/F.SG.GEN self also Maria be happy_[GEN] would.
 ‘I invite whoever also Maria would be happy to meet.’ (vogel2001)
- b. *Ich lade ein, wen sich auch Maria erfreuen würde.
 I invite_[ACC] W-M/F.SG.ACC self also Maria be happy_[GEN] would.
 ‘I invite whoever also Maria would be happy to meet.’ (vogel2001)
- (24) INT:GEN, EXT:DAT
- a. ?Bodo entledigt sich, wem immer Gerhard misstraut.
 Bodo rids_[GEN] self W-M/F.SG.DAT ever Gerhard mistrusts_{DAT}
 ‘Bodo gets rid of whoever Gerhard mistrusts.’ (vogel2001)
- b. ?Bodo entledigt sich, wessen immer Gerhard misstraut.
 Bodo rids_[GEN] self W-M/F.SG.GEN ever Gerhard mistrusts_{DAT}
 ‘Bodo gets rid of whoever Gerhard mistrusts.’ (vogel2001)

3.1.3.2 Ungrammatical examples

- (25) INT:NOM, EXT:ACC
- a. *Ich lade ein, wer mir sympathisch ist.
 I invite_[ACC] W-M/F.SG.NOM me nice is_{NOM}
 ‘I invite who I like.’ (vogel2001)
- b. *Ich lade ein, wen mir sympathisch ist.
 I invite_[ACC] W-M/F.SG.ACC me nice is_{NOM}
 ‘I invite who I like.’ (vogel2001)
- (26) INT:NOM, EXT:DAT
- a. *Ich vertraue, wer Hitchcock mag.
 I trust_[DAT] W-M/F.SG.NOM Hitchcock likes_{NOM}
 ‘I trust who likes Hitchcock.’ (vogel2001)

- b. *Ich vertraue, wem Hitchcock mag.
 I trust_[DAT] W-M/F.SG.DAT Hitchcock likes_{NOM}
 'I trust who likes Hitchcock.' (vogel2001)
- (27) INT:NOM, EXT:GEN
- a. *Bodo entledigt sich, wer immer andere Ansichten hat
 Bodo rids_[GEN] self W-M/F.SG.NOM ever other opinions has_[NOM]
 als er.
 than he
 'Bodo gets rid of whoever has different opinions than he.' (vogel2001)
- b. *Bodo entledigt sich, wessen immer andere Ansichten hat
 Bodo rids_[GEN] self W-M/F.SG.GEN ever other opinions has_[NOM]
 als er.
 than he
 'Bodo gets rid of whoever has different opinions than he.' (vogel2001)
- (28) INT:ACC, EXT:DAT
- a. *Ich vertraue wem auch Maria mag.
 I trust_[DAT] W-M/F.SG.DAT also Maria likes_{ACC}.
 'I trust whoever Maria also likes.' (vogel2001)
- b. *Ich vertraue wen auch Maria mag.
 I trust_[DAT] W-M/F.SG.ACC also Maria likes_{ACC}.
 'I trust whoever Maria also likes.' (vogel2001)
- (29) INT:ACC, EXT:GEN
- a. *Bodo entledigt sich, wen immer Henkel nicht mag.
 Bodo rids_[GEN] self W-M/F.SG.ACC ever Henkel not likes_{ACC}
 'Bodo gets rid of whoever Henkel does not like.' (vogel2001)
- b. *Bodo entledigt sich, wessen immer Henkel nicht mag.
 Bodo rids_[GEN] self W-M/F.SG.GEN ever Henkel not likes_{ACC}
 'Bodo gets rid of whoever Henkel does not like.' (vogel2001)
- (30) INT:DAT, EXT:GEN
- a. *Maria hilft, wessen andere sich entledigen möchten.
 Maria helps_[DAT] W-M/F.SG.GEN others self rid_[GEN] want
 'Maria helps whoever others want to get rid of.' (vogel2001)
- (i) *Maria hilft, wem andere sich entledigen möchten.
 Maria helps_[DAT] W-M/F.SG.DAT others self rid_[GEN] want
 'Maria helps whoever others want to get rid of.' (vogel2001)

3.1.3.3 Summary of the data

3.2 Background: relative clause theory

Standard raising, probably Cinque's double-headed structures

Table 3.4: Case attraction in headless relatives in Modern German

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

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.

3.3.1 Old High German

Table 3.5: Old High German relative pronouns in headless relatives

SG	F	M	N
NOM	d-iu	d-ër	d-az
ACC	d-ea/-ia/(-ie)	d-ën	d-az
DAT	d-ëru/-ëro	d-ëmu/-ëmo	d-ëmu/-ëmo
GEN	d-ëra/-ëru/-ëro	d-ës	d-ës
PL	F	M	N
NOM	d-eo/-io	d-ē/-ea/-ia/-ie	d-iu/-ei
ACC	d-eo/-io	d-ē/-ea/-ia/-ie	d-iu/-ei
DAT	d-ēm/-ën	d-ēm/-ën	d-ēm/-ën
GEN	d-ëro	d-ëro	d-ëro

Table 3.6: Gothic relative pronouns in headless relatives

SG	F	M	N
NOM	s-ō-ei	s-a-ei	þ-at-ei
ACC	þ-ō-ei	þ-an-ei	þ-at-ei
DAT	þ-izái-ei	þ-amm-ei	þ-amm-ei
GEN	þ-izōz-ei	þ-iz-ei	þ-iz-ei
PL	F	M	N
NOM	þ-ōz-ei	þ-ái-ei	þ-ō-ei
ACC	þ-ōz-ei	þ-anz-ei	þ-ō-ei
DAT	þ-áim-ei	þ-áim-ei	þ-áim-ei
GEN	þ-izō-ei	þ-izē-ei	þ-izē-ei

Table 3.7: Modern German relative pronouns in headless relatives

SG	F/M	N
NOM	w-er	w-as
ACC	w-en	w-as
DAT	w-em	
GEN	w-essen	

3.3.2 Gothic

3.3.3 Modern German

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.

- (31) ACC instead of NOM
- a. unde ne wolden níet 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 allowed

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.