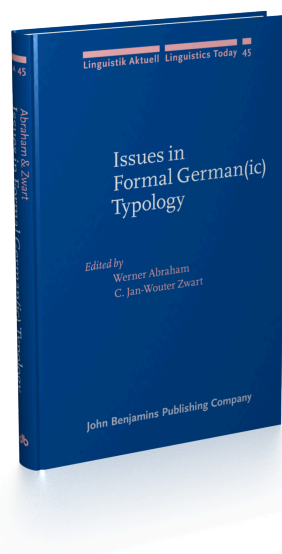


Introduction

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Introduction

Werner Abraham

The present collection focusses on German and its closest linguistic relatives, English and the Scandinavia, both genetically and areally. Among the Germanic languages, German obtains a remarkable position for a variety of reasons. In this collection, its discourse-prominency is highlighted in the sense that it scrambles and refocusses for change of context-fit in terms of discourse-functions as *thema* and *rhema*—something that no other Germanic language is able to do, at least not without cumbersome movement mechanics. One other striking property resides in the fact that German passivizes quite freely irrespective of transitivity and *Aktionsart* (aspectual) constraints as long as the predicate in question is agentive. From the latter it follows that passivization of intransitives trigger expletives to fill the subject position in order to safeguard V2, which is strictly adhered to.

The following collection of essays highlights these two issues of German and compares them with similar, and yet distinct, properties in other Germanic and European languages. Since discourse *thema* and discourse *rhema* are generally also signalled by definite and indefinite articles, respectively, discourse prominence reoccurs in the respective studies on articles and their functions. As a fourth remarkable property of German and its many and influential substandard varieties, interface aspects are investigated between ‘logical grammar’ and ‘parsing’ comprising non-cancelling multiple negation (‘negation concord’) and various forms of ellipsis. While focussing on something that has long been identified as ‘pragmatic’ and, by derivation, as non-systematic and arbitrary, the present papers discussing this topic take great pain in substantiating the core issues of focus and the discourse functions ‘*thema*’ and ‘*rhema*’ in systematic syntactic and logic-semantic terms. The notion of ‘typology’ in the title is programmatic to the extent that we believe that generative grammar provides the methodological instrumentarium for the description of languages and their fruitful comparison. Any description of

single languages, thus, will be typologically comparable if undertaken against this generative background.

“The German clause under discourse functional weight: Focus and Anti-focus” by Werner Abraham & László Molnárfi takes as a point of departure the assumption (Abraham 1997) that scrambling movement in Continental West-Germanic (Dutch and German, but German even less constrained than Dutch) needs to be taken seriously for a modification of syntactic theory. Other than movement for derivational purposes (such as tensing and case-marking), Scrambling in German is optional only under a clause-restricted perspective, but necessary, since principally refocusing, and essentially motivated by the goal of context-linking. The view is developed that not only is there no need for such ‘derivational’ functional categories for the purposes of licensing and assigning nominal case and verbal agreement with the subject, but, rather, that such an assumption would be wrong given the impact of discourse-functional properties also to be accounted for. For an empirically adequate description of German (and, in fact, of all West-Germanic) the full set of scrambling phenomena accompanied by characteristic and unambiguously classifiable changes of focus need to be accounted for. The typologically determining factor for this free movement property of German is the wide middle field. It is this middle field that allows for a linear and structural split between thematic material in the sentence and rhematic material. The claim is made that *thema* and *rhema* can be linked syntactically in an unambiguous way to the clausal structure on the basis of systematic clause-accent distribution, which is superficially separated between a default and a contrastive distribution. Such ‘accent-syntax’ is based on two principles: Cinque’s ‘Accent Null hypothesis’ (Cinque 1993) and Molnárfi’s ‘Antifocus Mechanism’. Both mechanisms together derive the restriction found to hold for the position+default accents of pronominals as well as definite and indefinite nominals.

Cedric Boeckx’ “On the co-occurrence of expletives and definite subjects in Germanic” examines the robustness and generality of the ‘Definiteness Effect’ in expletive constructions in Germanic Verb-Second languages. It first summarizes the evidence adduced over the years in support of the claim that the Definiteness Effect does not hold to the same degree in all (Germanic Verb-Second) languages. It provides a principled account of the cooccurrence of an expletive and a definite logical subject. As a first pass, Platzack’s (1998) conception of the verb-second phenomenon (in particular, the form the EPP takes in V2 languages) is capitalized on, which draws on Branigan (1996) to assert the crucial role of C, and on Rizzi (1997) to characterize the C-projec-

tion. The possibility is explored of capturing the same facts from a more minimalist perspective that does not assume a rich functional layer, or mechanisms like the EPP or the Doubly-Filled Comp Filter. The ‘varying’ strength of the Definiteness Effect is shown to be derivable from independently motivated lexical parameters, in accordance with current conceptions of parameter setting.

Jocelyn Cohan’s “Reconsidering identificational focus” takes up É. Kiss’ (1998) plea for a type of focus associated with a quantification-like operation that expresses “exhaustive identification on a set of entities given in the context or situation” (*identificational focus*). Data gathered from recordings of spontaneous spoken English indicate that focus on items in contrast, which is typically indicated solely by pitch accent, is best categorized as identificational. It is argued on the basis of this data that certain properties attributed to identificational focus by É. Kiss, exhaustiveness and contrast, are not inherent properties of identificational focus in English, but that they are derived. These apparent characteristics of identificational focus are tied to the nature of alternatives to the item in focus and are dependent on the discourse. Thus, they need not be directly attributed to the focus itself. The discussion to be presented thus reconsiders the basic properties of identificational focus and previously proposed categories thereof.

“Decomposing existence: evidence from Germanic” by Christine Czinglar deals with impersonal existential constructions (IECs) in German and Scandinavian languages. It is shown that IECs can be divided into “locative existentials” and “pure existentials” represented by the two German expletive constructions *es gibt* “it gives” and an existential construction *es hat* “it has”, which is found in Alemannic dialects in addition to *es gibt*. The two IECs differ with respect to event semantics: impersonal *geben* does not allow reference to one particular situation, i.e. it has a kind of generic or habitual flavor. Alemannic impersonal *haben*, on the other hand, allows reference to a single situation specifying some accidental property of an object. This event-semantic difference is fathomed out and compared in other Germanic languages based on studies by Freeze (1992) and Heine (1997), which yields that “have”-existentials in general (e.g. French *il y a*, Spanish *hay*, Croatian and Bulgarian *ima*) belong to the “locative existential” group. The English *there*-construction involving the copula *be* can also be described as a locative existential. This uniformity across languages is taken to allow for the claim that the difference between locative and pure existentials is connected to the argument structures of the verbs involved. The impersonal construction results

from external argument absorption by a non-referential pronoun. The target of this absorption is the possessor argument in the case of “have”, and the agent/cause argument in the case of “give”. A strong support for this analysis comes from Mainland Scandinavian. Danish also has a pure existential construction derived from an agentive verb: *der findes* is made up of the mediopassive of “find” and the locative adverbial “there”. The fact that pure existentials do not allow to refer to a single situation is captured by generic/habitual quantification over situations. Crucially, the generic quantifier is introduced into the structure as a by-product of the absorption of an agent/cause argument.

In “Polarity items in English and Danish”, Britta Jensen takes on polarity phenomena in Danish much neglected in the Scandinavian literature. Danish hosts a class of polarity items with specific constraints on their distribution, providing a challenge to current theories of polarity item licensing. The author addresses two questions: (1) how do Danish polarity items (PI)s compare to, or differ from, English PIs? and (2) which module of the grammar is responsible for PI licensing? After an introduction to typical polarity item licensing contexts in English and Danish, four Danish PIs with specific distributional and locality constraints are presented and novel analyses of these phenomena are offered. PI licensing is proposed to consist in feature checking and a locality constraint is articulated in terms of local checking at ΣP . These proposals are suggested to extend beyond Danish to account for PIs in other languages with limited distribution as well.

“On times and arguments: the case of receptive constructions in German” by Wolfgang Klein draws on the general assumption that verbs have an ‘argument structure’, which imposes various constraints on the noun phrases that can or must go with the verb, and an ‘event structure’, which characterises the particular temporal characteristics of the ‘event’ which the verb relates to. This event may be a state, a process, an activity, an ‘event in the narrow sense’, and others. Very much in this vein, Klein argues that the lexical content of a verb assigns descriptive properties to one or more arguments at one or more times, hence verbs have an ‘argument-time-structure’ (AT-structure). Numerous morphological and syntactical operations, such as participle formation or complex verb constructions, modify this AT-structure. The range of illustrations includes German receptive constructions such as *ein Buch geschenkt bekommen* “to get presented a book” and *das Fenster geöffnet kriegen* “to get the window opened”.

In Jürgen Lenerz' "Scrambling and reference in German" a closer look is taken at the general rule for German 'Don't scramble indefinites' or the somewhat more liberal 'Don't scramble existential indefinites'. Since this generalization turns out to be too strong a generalization the author considers the referential potential of the indefinite NP in more detail. Based on von Stechow's (1997) selective operator notion for a specific indefinite individual as a members of a set he concludes that the only constraint that the selection process follows is reference to the NP c-commanding the indefinite NP in question within VP. This is in contrast with definite NPs whose reference is independent of any c-commanding NP. However, as soon as the indefinite NP is scrambled the original c-command constraint appears to be suspended. As a result scrambled indefinite NPs are referentially ambiguous. Furthermore, if topicalized all the way into the topic position, indefinite NPs regain their referential disambiguity status from within VP, both in a generic, an existential, or an 'aboutness' reading.

Attributive adjectives in Germanic are uniformly prenominal. In contrast, the unmarked surface order in Romance is for adjectives to take a postnominal position, though certain adjectives may appear both pre- and postnominally. For these adjectives, a prenominal position receives a nonrestrictive reading. Conversely, a postnominal position yields a restrictive reading. The contrast in adjectival positions in English leads Ronat (1974) to differentiate between simple and complex adjectives (cf. also Bolinger 1967 and Jackendoff 1977). More recently, Abney (1987) reinterprets these proposal under the DP-Hypothesis, and assumes that prenominal descriptive adjectives select NP as their complement. Bernstein (1993) proposes that adjectives are adjoined to a maximal projection allowing only for ethnic adjectives to occur in spec-NP. She assumes that adjectives may be adjoined to NP or NumP. Enrique Mallen's "Attributive adjectives in Germanic and Romance" takes this as a background proposing a uniform analysis of attributive adjectives in Germanic and Romance as maximal projections in the nominal specifier projection. More specifically, I assume that attributive adjectives are base-generated in the highest and lowest NP—respectively—of a multiple NP-shell. Pre- and postnominal adjectives attain their surface position by a process of NP-raising, which adjoins the entire NP to a functional category, movement being triggered by inflectional features on the noun. The difference between the two types of adjectives, he claims, is that a restrictive qualitative and/or temporal postnominal adjective must match an additional degree and/or temporal feature. The stage where [+deg]/[+temp] is computed is labelled as

DegP/TP. The postnominal position of restrictive qualitative and temporal adjectives is then due to overt movement (Move-L) to match the relevant features. According to Chomsky (1995), the [+deg]/[+temp] feature may also be computed by feature movement (Move-F). By this operation, the features are attracted to Deg/T, satisfying the corresponding checking requirement, and the adjective remains in situ at Spell Out. Due to the availability of this second procedure, both restrictive qualitative and temporal adjectives may remain in NP and move along with the entire projection to spec-FP, resulting in the prenominal configuration. The distinction between Move-L versus Move-F to match [+deg]/[+temp] features accounts for the contrast between Romance and German with respect to the distribution of attributive adjectives. Assuming that Case-marking on the adjective is related to a functional category Kase encoding Case, and that this category dominates FP, then the adjective cannot be in Spec-DegP prior to LF. The necessary movement of the adjective in Spec-DegP to Spec-KP in order to match Case-features would violate the Minimal Link Condition.

As in German substandards, multiple negation is not logically cancelled in the standard of Afrikaans. In “Die Negationsklammer im Afrikaans—Mehrfachnegation aus formaler und funktionaler Sicht” (‘The negation bracket in Afrikaans—negative concord (NC) from a formal and a functional point of view’), László Molnárfi addresses this obvious parsing phenomenon and answers it quite differently from standard literature on the topic such as Haegeman (1995) for West Flemish or Bayer (1990) and Weiß (1999) for Bavarian. It is argued that NC in Afrikaans is not governed solely by the NEG-criterion, but it is about the minimal lexical identification of functional domains in the spirit of Ouhalla’s (1993) Identification Requirement. It is shown that NC is a copy-mechanism, silent copies of the strong first negator percolating all terminal nodes within the scope of negation. Written and spoken Afrikaans will be shown to differ with respect to the constraints which govern the morphological spell-out of the NEG-copies. Negative concord is much more radical in the spoken language, where the spell-out of *additional* negation copies with NC-reading is allowed. Following Abraham (1999, 2000), the emergence and use of certain grammatical forms is taken to be a specific means of oral communication employed to facilitate the parsing of sentences. From a functional sentence perspective, NC is analyzed as a characteristic property of spoken vernaculars. It is argued that spoken and written languages employ different strategies of information processing, affecting the semantic interpretation of negation. In the written language, an economy

condition on the identification of functional domains has to be respected, requiring that the opening and coda position of scope be marked non-redundantly within the same negation domain. Lacking the prosodic dimension of spoken vernaculars, the spell-out of *additional* NEG-copies will be taken to signal the opening of a new scope, leading to a *cumulative* interpretation of negation in Afrikaans. In the spoken language, on-line scope interpretation can be considerably delayed if the coda member of the negation bracket is in the domain of extraposition. Here the spell-out of additional negation copies, supported by appropriate prosodic correlates, can be exploited to correctly interpret negation scope and to identify rhematic elements early in the information flow. The existence of such morphological discourse shibboleths seem to be particularly helpful in SOV-languages, where the parser has to overcome a large structural space before identifying discourse status and grammatical functions, encoded into the coda position of the verbal bracket.

In “Bare singular count nouns in object position: a case study in Greek and German”, Athina Sioupi contrasts Greek and German verb-complement constructions that involve ‘production’ or ‘creation’, such as *write a poem*, *build a house*, *bake a cake*. It investigates why in these constructions which consist of a verb and a complement, the complement is allowed to appear bare (i.e., as a determinerless NP occurring in canonical argumental positions) in Greek, while in German the verb is always followed by a DP with an indefinite determiner, as illustrated in *gráfo gramma* ‘I am writing_letter’ and *Ich schreibe *(einen) Brief* ‘I am writing a letter’. Since much of the contemporary linguistic research on Greek and German focuses on particular usages of DPs, as well as on bare plurals/mass nouns and not on bare arguments in object positions, such structures need special attention. It is proposed that both in German and in Greek, the category of transitive verbs, as in English (Hale & Keyser 1996, 1997, 1999), has basically the same argument structure as unergatives (i.e. intransitive) verbs. Verbal categories that appear with a bare complement belong to the accomplishment verb class in combination with a bare complement. They lead to a non-delimited reading describing a process in Greek, while in German the verb and the complement appearing with a DP with an indefinite determiner have a delimited reading and describe an event. Taking into consideration that languages vary in what their NPs denote (Chierchia 1998) it is proposed that in Greek, like in Romance, NPs are predicates. This prevents them from occurring as arguments, unless the category Determiner is projected. In the latter case the bare N is analyzed

as an instance of a DP with a null D which has the semantics of nominalization operator and is responsible for type-shifting to kind. German, like most Germanic languages, allows both predicative and argumental NPs (Chierchia 1998). As regards the singular count portion they behave like Romance, i.e., they are predicates and as such they cannot appear bare as arguments, since in German there is no phonologically null D.

German sports clause-multiple *wh*-elements which remain in situ. Among the riddles connected to this characteristic are the so-called *partial movement* constructions in German exemplified by *Was glaubst du, wen Fritz getroffen hat?*—what-believe-you, who-Fritz-met-has—‘Who do you believe Fritz has met?’ In “*Wh*-expletives and partial *wh*-movement: two non-existing concepts?”, Wolfgang Sternefeld deals with properties pertinent to this construction. Based on Tappe (1981), Srivastav (1991), and Dayal (1996), an attempt is made to decide between what has come to be called the ‘direct dependency approach’ (DDA) and the ‘indirect dependency approach’ (IDA). Criteria are developed that lead to the argument that the IDA is more appropriate than the DDA. In order to show this it is necessary to introduce various modifications of the traditional analyses. The discussion is extended to an analogous construction in Hungarian, showing that the semantic method developed and independently motivated in the previous section is able to deal with a problem that has remained unsolved in previous theories. Given that the IDA is correct it emerges that the construction does not exhibit the properties usually attributed to it: neither does it contain *wh*-expletives nor does it exhibit partial movement.

John te Velde’s “Phases in the derivation of elliptical coordinate constructions in Germanic” proposes a derivational approach to some common forms of ellipsis in coordinate constructions found in German and English. The motivation for this approach is twofold: (1) a new proposal is needed because the ones currently available aren’t empirically adequate, as I will show; and (2) syntactic theory has progressed to the point where the current proposals are no longer compatible with recent developments. An approach is taken to coordinate ellipsis which can meet the challenges of the minimalist program. These include the items like the acquisition challenge: ‘How is a child able in a short period of time to acquire a proficiency in a language on the basis of defective and incomplete data?’ (The evidence points to an innate mechanism.); the challenge from the cognitive sciences: ‘How does the mind process language? How can language best be explored as a creative activity requiring the interface of the lexical–conceptual component with two other components,

the articulatory–perceptual and the interpretive components?’ (cf. Chomsky 1995, 1998); and the optimality (economy) challenge ‘How do we design a theory of grammar which reflects the human faculty of language as an “optimal solution to minimal design specifications”?’ (Chomsky 1999: 1). The three points are extended by a more detailed question: ‘What must a derivational approach to ellipsis in coordinate structures look like?’ The following possible answers are suggested: Pure Merge, i.e. Merge without movement, is the only suitable operation for the derivation of coordinate structures, given that there is no evidence that coordinate conjuncts move. The operations Merge and Move occur only when Pure Merge is not possible and then only within a clausal conjunct; Merge and Move are not necessary for conjunction. Movement cannot look ahead and target a goal in a different clause because Spell-Out occurs in phases which are limited to clause-internal domains. Symmetry requirements of coordinate structures cannot be captured by across-the-board (ATB) operations, as these must rely on “look ahead” when targeting a goal. Feature matching in coordinate constructions is a variant of feature matching in simplex structures; in coordinate constructions feature matching checks identity requirements whereas in simplex structures just nondistinctness is checked (cf. Chomsky 1999: 4). Feature matching forms the basis for non-phonological realization, which creates ellipsis.¹

1. For bibliographical references see in the respective contributions.

