SUBJECT INVERSION IN ENGLISH, FRENCH, ITALIAN AND DUTCH AND EMPTY SUBJECTS IN GERMAN

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0. This paper is concerned with certain constructions in German where the structural subject position appears to be empty at surface structure. It is argued that rather than presenting evidence for the non-configurationality of German (ie. that the subject is not represented structurally, outside the VP) the structures concerned resemble Inversion structures in English, French, Italian and Dutch, and might be susceptible to an account similar to that proposed for these constructions. This involves the assumption that German, to a limited extent, participates in PRO-Drop strategies. In this way, the German facts can be shown to be compatible with the Extended Projection Principle requirement that all clauses have subjects at every level of representation.

1. A number of constructions have been described in the literature (cf. Chomsky 1981, 1982, Reuland 1983a, b) where the structural subject position is apparently empty or occupied by a pleonastic element. The thematic subject is "post-verbal" in SVO languages and seems likely to be in the VP in the case of an SOV language. The situation can be illustrated by the following:

1. *English Presentationals*
   There walked into the room a well-known linguist.
2. *French Presentationals*
   Il est arrivé quelqu'un
   (There arrived somebody)
3. *Italian subject Inversion*
a. È arrivato Gianni.
   (Arrived John)

b. Ha telefonato Gianni.
   (Telephoned John)
4. *Dutch Presentationals*
   ... dat er een man in de kamer liep
   (that there a man into the room walked)

The question arises whether the analysis that accounts for constructions of this kind might also account for certain constructions in German where the structural subject position appears to be empty. These constructions are of the following kind:

5. *Passive*
   ... weil dem Kind das Fahrrad geschenkt wurde.
   (since to the child the bicycle given was)
6. *"Raising"*
a. ... weil dem Eckhard sein Sohn ein kluger Junge zu sein scheint.
   (since to Eckhard his son appears to be a bright boy)
7. *FLIP*
   ... weil mir die Sache gefällt.
   (since to me the thing pleases)
8. *Impersonal Passive*
   ... weil getanzt wurde.
   (since was danced)
   ... since there was dancing..
9. *Impersonal Active*
a. ... weil mich friert.
   (since me freezes)
   ... since I am cold.
b. ... weil mir vor euch graust.
   (since to me before you shudder)
   ... since you make me shudder.

Note that these sentences, with the exception of 6.a, lack thematic subjects altogether. The same occurs in Dutch impersonal passives:
10. Ik zag dat er gedanst werd.
    (I saw that there danced was)

In contrast to French, Dutch and English, German also lacks an overt pleonastic element, since *es*, whatever other functions it might serve (cf. Pütz 1975), certainly cannot appear in such contexts as those of the Dutch *er* illustrated in 4. and 10.a. above:

11. *... daß es ein Mann in das Zimmer ging.
    (that there a man into the room walked)
12. *... weil es getantzt wurde.
    ... since there was dancing.

Sentence initial *es* is restricted to root sentences, as illustrated in the following:

13.a. Es kommen viele Leute.
      There are a lot of people coming.
   b. *... weil es viele Leute kommen.
      ... since there are a lot of people coming.

This has led Lenerz (1981) to suggest that sentence initial *es* is simply a lexical realisation of the COMP expansion $\bar{\bar{X}}$ if this position is not filled via movement[1]

14. COMP $- \rightarrow \bar{\bar{X}}, \pm WH$

The problem, then, is to account for the surface structures in 5. to 9. and to see if they can be related to those in 1. to 4.

Notice that example 6. is headed *Raising*. This is because NP Movement is possible in this example, just as it is possible in the case of the passive:

15.a. weil sein Sohn$_i$ dem Eckhard [s t$_i$ ein kluger Junge zu sein scheint]
      (since his son to Eckhard a bright boy to be appears)
   b. ... weil [s das Fahrrad$_i$ [vp dem Kind t$_i$ geschenkt wurde]]
      (since the bicycle to the boy given was)

In fact, there are cases where NP Movement is obligatory in German: otherwise passives embedded under control verbs would violate B of the Binding Theory (cf. Chomsky 1981) by having a governed PRO:

16. ... weil er$_i$ riskierte [s PRO$_i$ [vp t$_i$ totgeschlagen zu werden]]
    ... since he risked being beaten to death.

Also in the case of FLIP verbs such as in example 7. the nominative NP may appear in the structural subject position:

17. ... weil die Sache mir gefällt
    (since the thing to me pleases)

The question is, then, whether sentences such as 5, 6.a. and 7. are derived from 15. and 16. or whether 15. and 16. are derived from 5, 6.a. and 7.

It seems fairly clear from 16. above that NP Movement exists in German and that Case assignment in the Raising and passive examples in 15. is also via movement to the structural subject position. If, as seems highly plausible, *gefallen* in 17. is an ergative verb (cf. Chomsky 1981), assigning a θ-role but not Case in the VP, the same analysis can apply. The result is a uniform and familiar account for Passive, Raising and ergatives, where the structural subject position is a non-argument ($\bar{A}$) position, where (nominative) Case is assigned, and is part of a chain formed via coindexing with a θ-marked position in the VP, respectively S.

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[1] For the derivation of root S's and Finite Verb Placement cf. Thiersch (1978), also for SOV vs. SVO arguments.

It does not seem plausible, however, that examples such as 5, 6.a and 7. above can be derived from the output of NP Movement as in 15. and 17. This would result in the nominative NP's either returning to their original deep structure positions or to positions adjoined to these, such as in the following:

18. [$_s$ t_i [$_{VP}$dem Kind [$_{\bar{v}}$ das Fahrrad$_i$ [$_{\bar{v}}$[$_{[V\pm]}$ t_i geschenkt] wurde]]]]

Such a movement would, in any case, result in an improperly bound trace in the structural subject position. It would seem, then, that in Passive, Raising and FLIP German has both movement and non-movement strategies for nominative Case assignment. If Case may be assigned in situ, however, the question is how?

One possibility for in situ Case assignment has been suggested by Den Besten (1981, 1982), where the VP internal NP receives Case via *Chain-Government* from the next available Case assigner (namely INFL) if there is no Case assigner in the VP. The structural subject position is either filled by the dative NP or it is not generated (in Dutch it is filled by *er*). The problem with the latter solution, of course, is that it violates the *Extended Projection Principle* (cf. Chomsky 1982), which requires that a clause have a subject at every level of representation. The first solution, equally, does not seem to be very well motivated.

A second possibility for in situ Case assignment might follow from the conventions suggested for the constructions in 1. to 4. at the beginning of this paper. Thus, under the analysis given in Chomsky (1981) the post-verbal NP in the English, French and Italian examples is co-superscripted with the structural subject position. The chains thus formed will contain both θ-roles and Case. It seems possible that this general approach might also account for the German constructions in 5. to 9. In this case, however, it will be necessary to establish what kind of element the structural subject position contains.

Under the analysis of the PRO-Drop parameter in Chomsky (1981) a functional definition of empty categories was employed that derived the PRO subject in examples such as 3.a. and b. via the rule R in the syntax. This affixation rule, which joins Agreement (AGR) to the verb, was said to optionally apply in the syntax for Italian but only in the phonology (PF) for English and other non-PRO-Drop languages. The result of R in the syntax was that the empty category in structural subject position was ungoverned and hence must be PRO. Under this analysis the empty category in structural subject position in the German examples 5. to 9. could not be PRO as in Italian, since passives and FLIP constructions can be embedded in Accusative and Infinitive (AcI) constructions. Via $\bar{\bar{S}}$ Deletion for Exceptional Case Marking (ECM), PRO would then be governed:

19.a. Er ließ [PRO dem Kind das Fahrrad schenken]

(He had to the child the bicycle give)
He had somebody give the child the bicycle.
b. Er ließ [PRO sich die Suppe schmecken]
(He had to himself the soup taste)
He ate the soup with relish.

In Chomsky (1982), however, the analysis of the "missing subject" in Italian as PRO is abandoned, because unlike the PRO found in control constructions, the "PRO" in Italian is not anaphoric; in other words, it has independent reference. Chomsky thus introduces *pro* (small PRO), which, with the features [− anaphor,+pronominal], fills the gap in the paradigm of empty categories formed by NP-trace ([+anaphor,−pronominal]), PRO([+anaphor,+pronominal]) and variable ([−anaphor,−pronominal]).

Unlike PRO, *pro* holds an exclusively governed position, namely that governed by ARG. Since *pro* is governed, the AcI argument against interpreting the empty subject position in German as the same as in Italian no longer holds. It thus seems possible that German might have a limited occurence of *pro*, though not to the same extent as PRO-Drop languages such as Italian. If, then, the structural subject position in examples 5. to 9. contains *pro*, the question arises of what the argument status of this *pro* might be.

Chomsky (1981) distinguishes three kinds of argument status for NP's in English, which have their PRO counterparts in Italian. This can be illustrated as follows:

20. *True Argument*
a. PRO[1] AGR[1] va.
b. He   goes.
21. *Quasi Argument*
a. PRO[1] AGR[1] piove.
b. It   is raining.
22. *Non-Argument*
a. PRO[1] AGR[1] ha telefonato Gianni[1].
b. There[1] walked into the room a famous linguist[1].

Replacing PRO[1] by *pro*[1] in the examples 20. to 22., it is clear that German does not have true argument *pro*:

23. a. *pro*[1] AGR[1] va.
     (goes)
b. *pro[1] geht AGR[1].
     (goes)

Nevertheless, there seems to be no reason not to assume that the relationship between the structural subject position and the VP-internal nominative NP's in the German examples 5. and 7. (Passive and FLIP) and S-internal nomi-

native in 6.a. (Raising) is the same as in the ergative sentence 3.a. In other words, the structural subject position contains a non-argument *pro* that is co-superscripted with the VP-internal NP, respectively S-internal NP, thus forming a θ-chain that has Case:

24.a.   ... weil pro^i dem Kind das Fahrrad^i geschenkt wurde
     (since to the child the bicycle was given)

   b.   ... weil pro^i mir die Sache^i gefällt
     (since to me the thing pleases)

   c.   ... weil pro^i dem Eckhard sein Sohn^i ein kluger Junge
     zu sein scheint
     (since to Eckhard his son a bright boy to be appears)

Note that this analysis of (non) Raising is not possible for English and Italian:

25.a.   *There seem several new people to have arrived.

   b.   *Sembra Gianni aver telefonato.
     (Seems John to have telephoned)

where either the subject or the embedded pleonastic element must be raised:

26.a.   Several new people seem to have arrived.

   b.   There seem to have arrived several new people.

27.a.   Gianni sembra aver telefonato.
     John seems to have telephoned.

   b.   Sembra aver telefonato Gianni.
     (Seems to have telephoned John)

This parallels the movement analysis required for Passive in these languages. So far, then, the pro^i subject postulated for the structural subject position in 5., 6.a and 7. is a non-argument in a non-argument position.

It seems that apart from expletive *pro* German has a few limited examples of quasi-argument *pro*, involving selection by the verb, analogous to the selection of *es, it, il* or *pro* for weather verbs in German, English, French and Italian respectively. In fact, for the impersonal actives in 9 above there are alternative variants with *es*:

28.a.   ... weil es mich friert.
     ... since I am cold.

   b.   ... weil es mir vor euch graust
     ... since you make me shudder

As in the case of weather verbs, *es* or *pro* can act as controllers:

29.a.   ... weil (es) mir vor euch PRO zu grauen anfing
     (since (it) to me before you to shudder began)

   b.   ... weil (es) mich PRO zu frieren anfing
     (since (it) me to freeze began)

pro in these cases thus demonstrates the properties of a quasi-argument (cf.

Chomsky 1981) and is susceptible to the same analysis as for weather verbs in Italian:

30.a.   ... weil pro_i mich friert AGR^i
     (since me freezes)

   b.   ... weil pro^i mir vor euch graust AGR^i
     (since to me before you shudders)

For the remaining case of the Impersonal Passive given in 8. above it seems plausible that a quasi-argument is also involved here. A possibility would be that *pro* in structural subject position is coindexed with an NP position in the VP, to which the verb assigns the θ-role of a quasi-argument:

31. ... weil pro_i^i [$_{VP}$ t_i getanzt wurde] AGR^i
     (since   danced was)

The Chain thus formed "externalizes" the (quasi-argument) θ-role, this being, perhaps, as proposed by Reuland (1983b), a requirement of passive morphology, also in the cases of intransitive verbs as in German and Dutch. Note that cosuperscripting in this case would be tantamount to introducing a fifth empty category. As it stands, the empty category in the VP is functionally defined as trace, thus diverging from the account for *pro* in Italian given in Chomsky (1982). There, the properties of *pro* are defined by its adjacency to INFL in deep structure. Such an adjacency is not possible anyway in German, due to its verb-final structure. Note also that *pro* is not governed by AGR in AcI constructions such as in 19. above.

2. The fact that *pro* can be coindexed with a position in VP and the fact that it can be governed by the matrix verb in AcI constructions suggest that it cannot be identified via Deep Structure adjacency to INFL as claimed by Chomsky (1982) for the Italian examples. It would seem that Case and the structural position at S-Structure identify *pro* in German. Borrowing a notion from Haider (1983), the following stipulation can apply:

32. The Case index of *pro* must be realised externally.

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