

Bavarian parasitic gaps revisited

1. Background: Felix (1985) draws attention to a peculiar construction in Bavarian German (henceforth: BG) illustrated in (1), which is ungrammatical in Standard German (henceforth: SG).

- (1) Das ist der Kerl_i den_i wenn ich e_i erwisch, erschlag ich e_i (BG)
 this is the guy_i who_i if I e_i catch beat I e_i
 ‘This is the guy who I will beat (up) if I catch him’

The construction in (1) has three mutually dependent properties: (i) the embedded *if*-clause immediately follows the *wh*-pronoun, a property that above all marks the construction as dialectal according to Felix; (ii) the verb of the final clause precedes its subject, which as shown in (2) vs. (3) is not the regular word order in either BG or SG relative clauses; (iii) there are two empty categories in (1), both co-indexed with the relative pronoun.

- (2) das ist der Kerl_i den_i ich e_i erschlag vs. (3) *das ist der Kerl_i den_i erschlag ich e_i
 this is the guy who I e_i beat this is the guy_i who_i beat I e_i

Felix (1985) analyses the construction in (1) as a parasitic gap construction. Specifically, he argues that *den* in (1) is extracted from the adjunct clause, whereas the empty category in the final clause is a parasitic gap. As evidence for his view that the *wh*-phrase has been extracted from the *if*-clause rather than from the final CP, Felix brings in the following two facts: first, as shown in (4), there are sentences in which there is only one gap from which the *wh*-phrase could have been extracted and second, as shown in (5), there are sentences in which the verbs of these two clauses assign different morphological cases:

- (4) Das ist der Wein_i den_i wenn ich e_i trink, krieg ich Kopfweh
 this is the wine_i which_i if I e_i drink get I headache
 (5) Das ist der Kerl_i den_i / *dem_i wenn ich e_i treff, werd ich e_i helfen
 this is the guy_i whom_i (acc) / whom_i (dat) if I e_i meet will I e_i help

2. Problems with Felix (1985): In addition to theoretical problems bearing on extraction out of a strong island and others (bearing on particular ingredients of his analysis), there are also a number of empirical problems with Felix’ analysis. First, extraction from strong islands is disallowed in another, similar parasitic gap construction in BG, namely the one that arguably feeds on the phenomenon of “Emphatic Topicalization” (cf. in particular Bayer 2001, Lutz 1997, 2004 *i.a.*):

- (6) a. Den_i wann i e derwisch, derschlog i e .
 him if I e catch slay I e
 ‘If I catch him, I slay him’
 b. *Den Peter_i / *Wen_i ärgert sich Hans, wenn er t_i sieht?
 the_{ACC} Peter / who annoys REFL Hans if he sees
 c. *Koa Mensch, wenn t_i b’suffa is, foit eam_i was g’scheids ei.
 no man if drunk is falls him something useful in

Under Felix’ analysis, if *den* in (1) leaves the island, this means among other things that it can reach a position from where it may c-command into the host CP, thereby licensing a parasitic gap in it. In addition to theory-internal problems, Felix’ analysis predicts that the relative pronoun should be able to cyclically move higher up, producing examples like (7):

- (7) *Das ist der Kerl den ich erwarte (dass) wenn ich erwisch, erschlag ich.
 this is the guy who I expect (that) if I catch slay I

However, the very fact that the relative pronoun in (1) must appear in the left edge of the (leftward-moved) island (see next section below) suggests that the pronoun never leaves this island. This is indeed what I propose. The crucial ingredients of my analysis are given in section 3 below.

3. Proposal: The central claims that I put forward in this paper are: (i) BG but not SG has a recursive CP, as given in (8), where the (VP-adjoined) *if*-clause has moved to the specifier position of the final CP, thereby triggering inversion (i.e. verb movement to C⁰), much like in English (cf. Emonds 1969) – e.g. *Up to the parliament marched thousands of demonstrators*; (ii) the so-called ‘relative pronoun’

in sentences like (1) is in fact a (PF-)merger of the complementizer *dass* ‘that’ and a clitic, analogous to the (dialectal) Italian *che l’* in (9) and the French *qui* in (10) – cf. Rooryck (2000), who analyzes *qui* as a complex of *que* and a clitic; (iii) the so-called ‘parasitic gap’ in constructions like (1) is a null resumptive pronoun, i.e. *pro* (cf. Cinque 1990), analogous to the Italian example in (11).

(8) Das ist der Kerl [_{CP} den_j [_{CP} [_{Spec,CP} wenn ich e_j erwisch]_i; erschlag ich t_i e_j]]

(9) e una cosa **che l’**ha detto il ministro (Fiorentino 2007)
is a thing **that it**_{cl}-has said the minister
(standard = **che** ha detto **0** il ministro)
that has said **0** the minister

(10) je voudrais un renseignement: c’est à propos de ma femme **qu’elle** a été opérée y a deux mois
I’d like to have some information: it regards my wife **that she** has been operated two months ago
(standard = **qui** ‘who’)

(11) Ecco la ragazza_i [che mi domando [chi_j [e_j crede [che e_i possa cantare]]]] (Taraldsen 1978)
‘Here is the girl that I wonder who thinks may sing’

The fact that neither Weak (and, in particular) nor Strong Crossover effects arise in BG in the relevant construction is a strong piece of evidence for the correctness of the analysis that I have proposed here; recall that resumption systematically gives rise to WCO obviation (cf. Demirdache 1991 for Arabic and McCloskey 1990 for Irish, who assign a bi-clausal structure to constructions containing resumptive pronouns, which for all intents and purposes, has the effects of the CP-recursion structure in (8)):

(12) Wea is da Bua_i den_j waun sei_i Muatta e_i dawascht, daschlogt-s(-n_i)?
who is the guy whom if his mother catches slays-she(-him) [Note: either pronoun or gap is fine] → No WCO effect

(13) [Wöches Büdl vom Hauns_i]_j, des waun a_i in da Zeitung e_j siagt, wü a_i e_j himochn? → No SCO
Which picture of Hans which if he_i in the paper e_j sees will he e_j destroy

In turn, the fact that BG (but not SG) notoriously violates the Doubly Filled Complementizer Filter (Bayer 1984, 2001) directly motivates my idea that CP-recursion is possible in BG but not in SG:

(14) I woäß ned **wer daß** des doa hat.
I know not **who that** this done has

Finally, the idea that so-called relative pronouns are inflected complementizers has been independently argued for by Pesetsky & Torrego (2006:note 22) for another Germanic language (on top of English), namely Dutch: “The Dutch counterpart to English finite *who* and *which* relatives [...] instead displays a form that starts with *d-*, just like demonstratives and just like the normal declarative complementizer *dat*. This form agrees with the relativized head in gender (neuter vs. non-neuter) and in number. [...] We suspect that the presence of *d-* rather than *w-* is significant. The [...] elements *die* and *dat* are agreeing complementizers, not *wh*-phrases [...]. Dutch finite relative clauses differ from Romance relatives (and from English infinitival relatives) in showing ϕ -feature agreement, but they are just like their Romance counterparts (and unlike English finite relatives) in showing C/D morphology rather than *wh*-morphology on its agreeing complementizers.”

References: Bayer, J. 1984. COMP in Bavarian syntax. *The Linguistic Review* 3: 209-274. Bayer, J. 2001. Asymmetry in emphatic topicalization. In C. Féry & W. Sternefeld (eds.) *Audiatu Vox Sapientiae*. Akademie-Verlag, Berlin. 15-47. Cinque, G. 1990. *Types of A-bar Dependencies*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press. Demirdache, H. 1991. Resumptive Chains in Restrictive Relatives, Appositives and Dislocation Structures. Ph.D. Dissertation, MIT. Emonds, J. 1969. Root and structure-preserving transformations. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Linguistics Club. Felix, S. 1985. Parasitic gaps in German. In W. Abraham (ed.) *Erklärende Syntax des Deutschen* 173-201. Tübingen: Narr. Fiorentino, G. 2007. European relative clauses and the uniqueness of the relative pronoun type. *Italian Journal of Linguistics* 19(2): 263-291. Lutz, U. 1997. Parasitic gaps und Vorfeldstruktur. In F.-J. d’Avis & U. Lutz (eds.) *Zur Satzstruktur des Deutschen*. Arbeitspapiere des Sonderforschungsbereichs 340, 90, 55-80. Lutz, U. 2004. ET, parasitic gaps and German clause structure. In H. Lohnstein & S. Trissler (eds.) *The Syntax and Semantics of the Left Periphery 265-311*. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter. McCloskey, J. 1990. Resumptive pronouns, A’-binding, and levels of representation in Irish. In R. Hendrick (ed.) *The Syntax of Modern Celtic Languages* 199-248. New York: Academic Press. Rooryck, J. 2000. *Configurations of Sentential Complementation*. Routledge: London. Pesetsky, D. & E. Torrego. 2006. Probes, goals and syntactic categories. In Y. Otsu (ed.) *Proceedings of the 7th annual Tokyo Conference on Psycholinguistics*. Tokyo: Hituzi Syobo Publishing Company. Taraldsen, K.T. 1978. On the NIC, vacuous application, and the *that-trace* filter. Bloomington: IULC