

AGREE—THE OTHER VP-INTERNAL SUBJECT HYPOTHESIS

Synopsis This paper addresses the question of whether movement of the subject to SpecTP/IP is motivated by the need to check (case and agreement) features or by the EPP (the requirement that SpecTP be filled). It will be shown that in certain constructions in German, subjects (i.e., nominative XPs agreeing with the finite verb) are in a position lower than their case/agreement position (i.e., SpecTP) at PF *and* LF, showing that case and agreement is established without overt or covert movement to SpecTP. The paper thus provides empirical evidence for an operation AGREE (i.e., in situ feature matching without subsequent overt or covert movement/pied piping) as suggested for, eg., expletive constructions in Chomsky (1998, 2000) and against the claim that feature checking/matching requires movement.

The argument in a nutshell In German topicalization structures, the surface subject may be contained in the fronted constituent (cf. (1); Haider 1990). Two crucial properties of these structures taken together motivate the existence of an AGREE operation without movement. First, the fronted XP is ν P/VP and cannot be TP; second, the nominative XP cannot take scope outside the fronted ν P/VP. From the first property it follows that the nominative XP is inside the ν P/VP (i.e., in a position lower than the case/agreement position [SpecTP]) at PF. From the second property it follows that the nominative XP is inside the ν P/VP (i.e., in a position lower than the case/agreement position [SpecTP]) at LF. Since the subjects in (1) bear nominative case and obligatorily agree with the finite verb, the case and agreement relation, however, cannot have been established by movement (neither overt nor covert), we conclude that case and agreement can only be met in situ (i.e., by a mechanism such as AGREE).

Evidence The motivation for the claim that the fronted XPs in (1) are ν Ps/VPs rather than TPs is based on a distributional difference between nominative and non-nominative XPs in topicalization structures. As is illustrated in (1) vs. (2), nominative XPs can only be part of a topicalized constituent when the nominative XP is indefinite/non-specific (cf. Kratzer 1984, Haider 1990). This contrasts sharply with non-nominative XPs which are not subject to any definiteness restriction (cf. the wellformed definite dative in (1)c, or the definite accusatives in (3)). The ungrammaticality of (2) can thus not be seen as the result of a (purely) semantic restriction on topicalization but rather as a restriction which is sensitive to a combination of case/position and interpretation. The account we suggest is built on the following two assumptions. First, following Diesing (1990), definite/specific XPs have to move (overtly) to their respective case positions (SpecTP, ν P). Second, a fronted XP has to include its head (cf. Haider 1993, Wurmbrand 1999). Assuming definite nominatives are in SpecTP, the fronted XP in (2) has to be (at least) TP; however, since the head of this TP (the auxiliary) has moved out (as an instance of verb second movement), fronting of the “headless” TP is illicit. In (1) and (3), on the other hand, fronting of the ν P/VP is possible since accusatives check case in Spec ν P and indefinite nominatives do not have to move out of the ν P/VP.

The claim that the nominative XPs in (1) are inside the ν P/VP at LF is motivated by scope properties. As is illustrated in (4), fronted XPs display the well-known *scope freezing* effect (Barss 1986, Sauerland 1997)—i.e., topicalized XPs can reconstruct but are then frozen for scope. While the non-fronted examples in (5) are ambiguous between a wide and a narrow scope interpretation for the universal QPs, a wide scope interpretation of the universal QPs is prohibited in (4). Thus, the nominative XPs in (4) are forced to stay inside the fronted XP—showing that no covert case movement can take place.

- (1) a. [Ein Wagen geschenkt]_{VP} wurde mir noch nie
 [A car-NOM given]_{VP} became me-DAT never
 'It has never happened that I was given a car as a present' *passive*
- b. [Ein Fehler unterlaufen]_{VP} ist ihrem Mann noch nie
 [A mistake-NOM happened]_{VP} is her husband-DAT never
 'It never happened that her husband made a mistake' *unaccusative*
- c. [Außenseiter gewonnen]_{VP} haben/*hat hier noch nie
 [outsiders won]_{VP} have/*has here never
 'It never happened before that outsiders won here' *unergative*
- d. ?[Ein Millionär dem/einem Studenten einen Wagen geschenkt]_{VP} hat hier noch nie
 [A millionaire-NOM the/a student-DAT a car-ACC given]_{VP} has here never
 'It has never happened here that a millionaire gave the/a student a car as a present' *transitive*
- (2) a. *[Der Wagen geschenkt]_{TP} wurde mir gestern
 [The car-NOM given]_{TP} became me-DAT yesterday
 'Yesterday, I was given the car as a present'
- b. *[Dieser Fehler unterlaufen]_{TP} ist ihr noch nie
 [This mistake-NOM happened]_{TP} is her-DAT never
 'It never happened that she made this mistake'
- c. *[Der Außenseiter gewonnen]_{TP} hat hier noch nie
 [The outsider won]_{TP} has here never
 'It never happened before that the outsider won here'
- d. *[Der Millionär einem Studenten einen Wagen geschenkt]_{TP} hat hier noch nie
 [The millionaire-NOM a student-DAT a car-ACC given]_{TP} has here never
 'It has never happened here that the millionaire gave a student a car as a present'
- (3) a. [Den Peter besucht]_{VP} hat wieder einmal nur die Maria
 [The Peter-ACC visited]_{VP} has again (once) only the Mary
 'It was again only Mary who visited Peter'
- b. ?[Den Wagen repariert]_{VP} hat man mir gestern
 [The car-ACC repaired]_{VP} has one me-DAT yesterday
 'Yesterday, they repaired the car for me'
- (4) a. ?[Jedes Haus gefallen]_{VP} sollte mindestens einem Kunden
 [Every house-NOM like]_{VP} should at-least one client-DAT
 'At least one client should like every house' $\exists \gg \forall; * \forall \gg \exists$
- b. ?[Jede Übung gelungen]_{VP} ist nur einem Kind
 [Every exercise-NOM managed]_{VP} is only one child-DAT
 'Only one child managed to do every exercise' $\exists \gg \forall; * \forall \gg \exists$
- c. ?[Alle Fehler unterlaufen]_{VP} sind/*ist nur einem Studenten
 [All mistakes-NOM happened]_{VP} are/*is only one student
 'Only one student made all mistakes' $\exists \gg \forall; * \forall \gg \exists$
- (5) a. weil mindestens einem Kunden jedes Haus gefallen sollte
 since at-least one client-DAT each house-NOM liked should
 'since at least one client should like every house' $\exists \gg \forall; ? \forall \gg \exists$
- b. weil mindestens einem Kind jede Übung gelungen ist
 since at-least one child-DAT each exercise-NOM managed is
 'since at least one child managed to do every exercise' $\exists \gg \forall; ? \forall \gg \exists$
- c. weil mindestens einem Studenten jeder Fehler unterlaufen ist
 since at-least one student-DAT each mistake-NOM happened is
 'since at least one student made every mistake' $\exists \gg \forall; ? \forall \gg \exists$

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