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## INDIRECT OBJECT ADVANCEMENT IN GERMAN \*

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The aim of this paper is to motivate a rule of indirect object advancement (henceforth 3 to 2 advancement) in German.<sup>1</sup> Such a rule has been motivated for languages which include, among others, Indonesian (Chung 1976), Tzotzil (Aissen - to appear) and English (Perlmutter and Postal 1978). It will be shown that 3 to 2 advancement exists in German, although it is a highly restricted rule occurring with only a handful of predicates. I will show that a relational analysis of the following sentences includes an application of 3 to 2 advancement in that the underlined nominals are initial 3s which advance to 2.

- 1a) Man fragt mich die unmöglichsten Dinge.<sup>2</sup>  
 one/NOM asks me/ACC the most impossible things/ACC  
 'People ask me the most impossible things.'
- 1b) Der Professor fragte mich alle Einzelheiten ab.  
 the professor/NOM asked me/ACC all details/ACC particle  
 'The professor examined me on every detail.'
- 1c) Der Lehrer hörte mich die Vokabeln ab.  
 the teacher/NOM heard me/ACC the vocabulary items/ACC part.  
 'The teacher heard my vocabulary list.'
- 1d) Er lehrt unsere Kinder die deutsche Sprache.  
 he/NOM teaches our children/ACC the German language/ACC  
 'He teaches our children the German language.'

Since the subsequent discussion will be concerned mainly with the term GRs, I will begin with a listing of the characteristics of German 1s, 2s and 3s relevant for the purposes of this paper.

Characteristics of 1s

- a) Final 1s are marked NOM.  
 b) Final 1s trigger person and number agreement on the verb.

Characteristics of 2s

- a) Final 2s are marked ACC.  
 b) Only 2s can become 1s of passive sentences with the auxiliary werden (henceforth werden-passive), as in the following sentences.

- 2a) Das Mädchen schenkte dem Jungen ein Buch.  
 the girl/NOM gave the boy/DAT a book/ACC  
 'The girl gave the boy a book.'
- 2b) Ein Buch wurde dem Jungen von dem Mädchen geschenkt.  
 a book/NOM AUX the boy/DAT by the girl/PP given  
 'A book was given to the boy by the girl.'
- 2c) \*Der Junge wurde von dem Mädchen ein Buch geschenkt.  
 the boy/NOM AUX by the girl/PP a book/ACC given  
 'The boy was given a book by the girl.'

### Characteristics of 3s

- a) Final 3s are marked DAT.
- b) 3s which occur in a transitive stratum (one containing a 2 and a 1) with a predicate which allows a werden-passive can advance directly to 1 by what will henceforth be called the bekommen-passive.

### The bekommen-passive

Folsom (1963 and 1966) and Reis (1976) discuss the similarity between sentences such as 3) and werden-passives such as 2b).

- 3) Der Junge bekam von dem Mädchen ein Buch geschenkt.  
 the boy/NOM AUX by the girl/PP a book/ACC given  
 'The boy was given a book by the girl.'

The points of resemblance to werden-passives are both morphological (a. and b.) and distributional (c.)

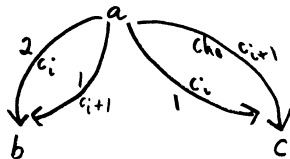
- a. The underlying subject appears as object of the preposition von, which likewise marks the passive chomeur in werden-passives.
- b. The main verb appears as a past participle, as in werden-passives.
- c. The set of verbs which allows the bekommen-passive is a subset of the set of verbs which allows the werden-passive.

The points of difference are:

- d. The auxiliary verb is not werden but rather bekommen, kriegen, or erhalten.
- e. The final 1 of the bekommen-passive corresponds to the DAT object (the 3) of the active (compare 2a and 3) while the final 1 of the werden-passive corresponds to the ACC object (the 2) of the active (compare 2a and 2b).

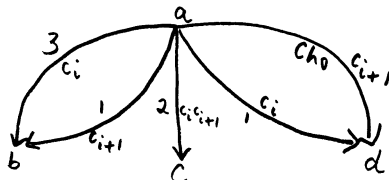
Thus relational networks of werden-passives contain the subnetwork:

4)



while relational networks of bekommen-passives contain the subnetwork:

5)



It should be mentioned at this point that the 3s advanced to 1 by the bekommen-passive are not necessarily initial 3s. The following sets of sentences involve Possessor ascension to 3 (6), Benefactive to 3 advancement (7) and Adversative to 3 advancement (8). The a) forms of the sentences are those in which no advancement has taken place, the b) forms are those in which the various advancements to 3 have taken place, and the c) forms are the corresponding bekommen-passives. The bekommen-passive can therefore be used as a test for 3-hood but not for initial 3-hood.

- 6a) Er legte die Hand auf den Kopf des Jungen.  
he/NOM laid the hand/ACC on the head/PP of the boy/GEN
- 6b) Er legte dem Jungen die Hand auf den Kopf.  
he/NOM laid the boy/DAT the hand/ACC on the head/PP
- 6c) Der Junge bekam von ihm die Hand auf den Kopf  
gelegt.  
the boy/NOM AUX by him/PP the hand/ACC on the head/PP  
gelegt.  
laid  
'He laid his hand on the boy's head.'
- 7a) Er öffnete die Tür für die Dame.  
he/NOM opened the door/ACC for the lady/PP
- 7b) Er öffnete der Dame die Tür.  
he/NOM opened the lady/DAT the door/ACC
- 7c) Die Dame bekam von ihm die Tür geöffnet.  
the lady/NOM AUX by him/PP the door/ACC opened  
'He opened the door for the lady.'
- 8a) Der Vater nahm das Spielzeug von dem Jungen weg.  
the father/NOM took the toy/ACC from the boy/PP away
- 8b) Der Vater nahm dem Jungen das Spielzeug weg.  
the father/NOM took the boy/DAT the toy/ACC away
- 8c) Der Junge bekam vom Vater das Spielzeug  
weggenommen.  
the boy/NOM AUX by the father/PP the toy/ACC  
taken away  
'The father took the toy away from the boy.'

### Verbs with two accusative 'objects'

The small set of German predicates which occur with two nominal arguments in the accusative case includes at least four which can be shown to involve 3 to 2 advancement. These are fragen 'ask', abfragen 'ask, question thoroughly, examine', abhören 'hear' (as in 'hear someone's lessons') and lehren 'teach'. The first three will be discussed as a group, then lehren will be discussed along with two of its synonyms.

### Fragen, abfragen and abhören

Sentences 1abc) appear, at least superficially, to contain two direct objects. The Stratal Uniqueness Law (Perlmutter and Postal 1978) rules out the possibility that both objects are 2s on the same stratum. I claim that in each of these sentences mich 'me' is the initial 3 but the final 2 and that die unmöglichsten Dinge,

alle Einzelheiten and die Vokabeln are initial 2s but final chomeurs.

That mich is at some stage a 3 is indicated by the fact that all three sentences have bekommen-passives in which ich 'I' (the nominative form corresponding to accusative mich) is the final 1.<sup>4</sup>

- 9a) Ich bekomme die unmöglichsten Dinge gefragt.  
I/NOM AUX the most impossible things/ACC asked  
'I get asked the most impossible things.'
- 9b) Ich bekam vom Professor alle Einzelheiten abgefragt.  
I/NOM AUX by the prof./PP all details/ACC examined  
'I was examined on every detail by the professor.'
- 9c) Ich bekam vom Lehrer die Vokabeln abgehört.  
I/NOM AUX by the teacher/PP the vocab./ACC heard.  
'I had my vocabulary list heard by the teacher.'

That die unmöglichsten Dinge, alle Einzelheiten and die Vokabeln are not 3s on a transitive stratum at any stage is indicated by the fact that they cannot occur as final 1s of bekommen-passives.<sup>5</sup>

- 9d) \*Die unmöglichsten Dinge bekommen mich gefragt.  
NOM AUX ACC
- 9e) \*Alle Einzelheiten bekommen mich abgefragt.  
NOM AUX ACC
- 9f) \*Die Vokabeln bekamen mich abgehört.  
NOM AUX ACC

That mich is at some stage a 2 is indicated by the fact that it is marked ACC in 1abc) and that all three sentences have werden-passives with ich 'I' as subject.<sup>6</sup>

- 10a) Ich werde die unmöglichsten Dinge gefragt.  
I/NOM AUX the most impossible things/ACC asked  
'I am asked the most impossible things.'
- 10b) Ich wurde vom Professor alle Einzelheiten abgefragt.  
I/NOM AUX by the prof./PP all details/ACC examined  
'I was examined on every detail by the professor.'
- 10c) Ich wurde vom Lehrer die Vokabeln abgehört.  
I/NOM AUX by the teacher/PP the vocab./ACC heard  
'I got my vocabulary list heard by the teacher.'

That die unmöglichsten Dinge, alle Einzelheiten and die Vokabeln are 2s at some stage is indicated by the fact that they too may occur as subjects of werden-passives.

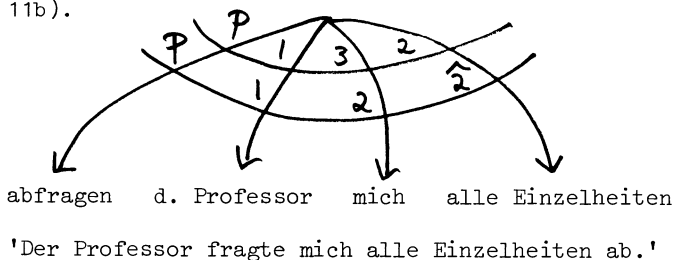
- 11a) ?Die unmöglichsten Dinge werden mich gefragt.<sup>7</sup>  
the most impossible things/NOM AUX me/ACC asked  
'The most impossible things are asked of me.'
- 11b) Alle Einzelheiten wurden mir abgefragt.  
all details/NOM AUX me/DAT examined  
'Every detail was demanded of me.'

- 11c) Die Vokabeln wurden mir abgehört.  
 the vocab. items/NOM AUX me/DAT heard  
 'My vocabulary list was heard.'

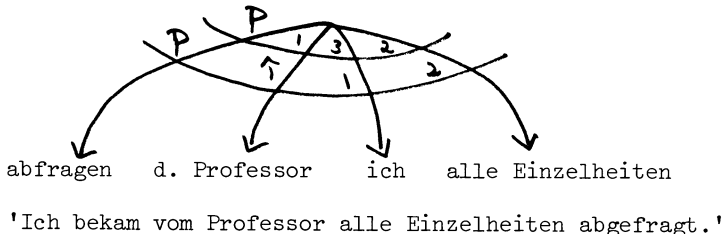
What is particularly interesting here is that the initial 3 has the case marking of a final 3 in 11bc). This indicates that 3 to 2 advancement does not apply if the initial 2 advances to 1. This holds for abfragen and abhören and also for lehren, as will be demonstrated shortly, but not for fragen.

I suggest the following stratal diagrams for sentences 1b), 9b), 10b) and 11b).

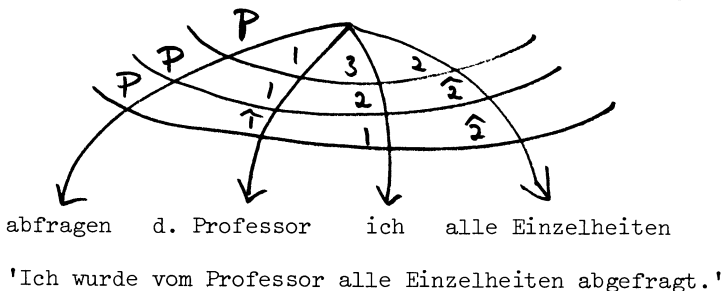
1b')



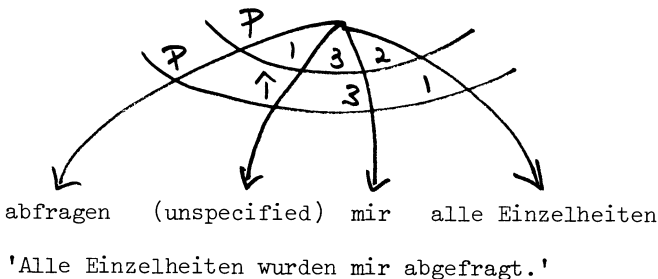
9b')



10b')



11b')



Lehren 'teach' and its synonyms

Lehren also belongs to the set of verbs with two ACC arguments (12a). As with abfragen and abhören the initial 3 does not advance to 2 if the initial 2 advances to 1 (12b). The bekommen-passive is possible (12c). Finally, some speakers of German use lehren with a DAT argument and an ACC argument in the active (12d).

- 12a) Er lehrt unsere Kinder die deutsche Sprache.  
 he/NOM teaches our children/ACC the German language/ACC  
 'He teaches our children the German language.'
- 12b) Die deutsche Sprache wird unseren Kindern (\*unsere Kinder)  
 the Ger. lang./NOM AUX our children/DAT (our children/ACC)  
 von ihm gelehrt.  
 by him/PP taught  
 'The German language is taught to our children by him.'
- 12c) Unsere Kinder bekommen von ihm die dt. Sprache gelehrt.  
 Our children/NOM AUX by him/PP the Ger. lang./ACC taught  
 'Our children get taught the German language by him.'
- 12d) Er lehrt unseren Kindern die deutsche Sprache.  
 NOM DAT ACC  
 'He teaches our children the German language.'

Some speakers use the construction exemplified in 12a) while others use the construction in 12d), which seems to indicate that 3 to 2 advancement is optional with lehren, although it does not seem to be optional for individuals.

The animate object can advance to 2 and then to 1 if and only if the initial 2 is a subordinate clause.

- 12e) \*Unsere Kinder werden von ihm die deutsche Sprache gelehrt.  
 NOM AUX PP ACC
- 12f) Unsere Kinder werden gelehrt, die Wahrheit zu sagen.  
 NOM AUX the truth to tell  
 'Our children are taught to tell the truth.'

That unsere Kinder in 12a) is a 3 at some point is indicated by the DAT marking of 12b) and 12d) and by the final 1-hood of unsere Kinder in 12c). That it is a final 2 is indicated by its ACC marking and by the fact that it can advance to final 1 of a werden-passive under conditions just specified, cf. 12f). 3 to 2 advancement has therefore applied in 12a).<sup>8</sup>

It is interesting to compare lehren with its synonyms beibringen and unterrichten since the three predicates have different final configurations of arguments. A comparison enables us to test the claim that initial stratal GRs are predictable on universal semantic grounds (cf. Perlmutter 1979), since a corollary of that claim is that predicates with the same meaning assign the same initial GRs to their arguments.

- 12a) Er lehrt unsere Kinder die deutsche Sprache.  
 NOM ACC ACC

- 13a) Er bringt unseren Kindern die deutsche Sprache bei.  
 NOM                    DAT                    ACC
- 14a) Er unterrichtet unsere Kinder in der deutschen Sprache.  
 NOM                    ACC                    PP

Beibringen occurs with a final 3 and a final 2. Both werden- and bekommen-passives of 13a) are possible.

- 13b) Unsere Kinder bekommen von ihm die dt. Sprache beigebracht.  
 NOM                    ACC
- 13c) Die deutsche Sprache wird unseren Kindern von ihm beigebracht.  
 NOM                    DAT

3 to 2 advancement does not apply.

- 13d) \*Er bringt unsere Kinder die deutsche Sprache bei.  
 NOM                    ACC                    ACC

Unterrichten occurs in a variety of constructions. When those being taught are present in the sentence, that being taught appears as the object of the preposition in 'in', cf 14a). If those being taught are not present, that being taught appears in the accusative case with no preposition, cf. 14b), but if the instructee is present, it appears in the accusative case regardless of the presence or absence of the object of the instruction, cf. 14a) and 14c).

- 14b) Er unterrichtet die deutsche Sprache.  
 he/NOM teaches the German language/ACC
- 14c) Er unterrichtet unsere Kinder.  
 he/NOM teaches our children/ACC

I claim that 3 to 2 advancement applies in 14a) and 14c). Unterrichten differs from fragen, abfragen, abhören and lehren in that the 2-chomeur resulting from 3 to 2 advancement is not marked ACC but rather is marked (idiosyncratically?) with the preposition in. ACC marking of the chomeur renders the sentence ungrammatical.

- 14d) \*Er unterrichtet unsere Kinder die deutsche Sprache.  
 NOM                    ACC                    ACC

Unterrichten occurs in a variety of passive constructions.<sup>9</sup>

- 15a) Die deutsche Sprache wird von ihm unterrichtet.  
 NOM                    AUX    PP    taught  
 'The German language is taught by him.'
- 15b) Unsere Kinder werden von ihm unterrichtet.  
 NOM                    AUX    PP    taught  
 'Our children are taught by him.'
- 15c) Unsere Kinder werden von ihm in der dt. Sprache unterrichtet.  
 NOM                    AUX    PP    PP                    taught  
 'Our children are taught the German language by him.'

15d) Unsere Kinder bekommen von ihm die dt. Sprache unterrichtet.  
           NOM          AUX          PP          ACC                  taught  
 'Our children get taught German by him.'

The final 1s of the werden-passives 15a) and 15bc) (die deutsche Sprache and unsere Kinder respectively) are 2s on a non-final transitive stratum. On the other hand, 15d) indicates that unsere Kinder is at some point a 3 on a transitive stratum. This therefore indicates strongly that in 14a) unsere Kinder is the initial 3, final 2 and that in der deutschen Sprache is the initial 2, final 2-chomeur as a result of the advancement of the initial 3 to 2. Lehren, beibringen and unterrichten, then, all have initial strata with a 1, a 2 and a 3, despite their quite different final strata.

### Summary

I have shown that a rule of 3 to 2 advancement exists in German, that some 2-advancement chomeurs are marked ACC, hence camouflaged as final 2s, that at least one 2-advancement chomeur occurs as a prepositional phrase, and that 3 to 2 advancement interacts with 3 to 1 advancement (bekommen-passive) and 2 to 1 advancement (werden-passive). 14c) shows that 3 to 2 advancement can apply even when there is no initial 2. The result is a superficially transitive sentence. This may well be the case with predicates other than unterrichten. This, taken together with the prepositional marking of the chomeur in 14a), which also may well occur with other predicates, may be an indication that 3 to 2 advancement occurs with more predicates than those I have discussed here.

### Footnotes

\*I would like to thank my informants Gisela Paffenholz, Marianne Reimann and Walter Veit and the students in my 1981 course "Problems of German Word and Sentence Formation" for the patience with which all of them suffered through my initial attempts to formulate this hypothesis. I would also like to thank Michael Clyne, John Newman, Ian Smith and Shelly Harrison for reading an earlier version and suggesting improvements.

1. This paper is written in the framework of Relational Grammar as presented in Perlmutter and Postal (1977, 1978) and Perlmutter (1979, 1980).
2. NOM "Nominative", ACC "Accusative", DAT "Dative", GEN "Genitive" and PP "Prepositional Phrase" refer to grammatical cases and the morphological marking thereof. AUX is used in this paper to refer exclusively to passive auxiliaries.
3. Reis (1976) and Edmondson (1978) state that the bekommen-passive promotes 3s even from non-transitive strata, e.g.

- 3.1. Er kriegte von allen gedankt,  
 he/NOM got by all thanked  
 'He was thanked by all.'

corresponding to the active

- 3.2. Alle dankten ihm.  
 all/NOM thanked him/DAT  
 'Everyone thanked him.'

The bekommen-passive seems to vary from individual to individual and from region to region. People also seem to be told at some point in their education that they should not use it, and the memory of this admonition affects grammaticality judgments as well. My informants do not accept the bekommen-passive unless a 2 is also present on the departure stratum, so they do not accept 3.1. Nor do they accept bekommen-passives in which a 2 rather than a 3 advances to 1. Such passives are also claimed by Reis and Edmondson to be grammatical.

4. GP and MR accept these sentences. WV does not. He also does not accept 6c), 7c) and 8c). This bears out the observation in the previous footnote. All three informants are from the Rhineland, yet WV's use of the bekommen-passive is relatively restricted in comparison with GP's and MR's, and MR's use of it is more restricted than GP's. I therefore cannot and consequently do not claim that all of the sentences in this article are accepted by all speakers of German. They are all accepted by GP and most are accepted by MR. WV seems to accept bekommen-passives only when bekommen 'get, receive' can be understood literally. This also seems to be the case with at least some Swiss and Austrian speakers.

5. It cannot be argued that any verb with two ACC arguments can advance one of them to 1 via the bekommen-passive. For instance, the verb nennen 'name, call' appears with two ACC arguments, cf. 9g), but has only a werden-passive, cf. 9j):

- 9g) Er nannte mich einen Idioten.  
 he/NOM called me/ACC an idiot/ACC  
 9h) \*Ich bekam von ihm einen Idioten genannt.  
 NOM AUX by him ACC called  
 9i) \*Ein Idiot bekam mich von ihm genannt.  
 NOM AUX ACC  
 9j) Ich wurde von ihm ein Idiot genannt.  
 I/NOM AUX by him an idiot/NOM(!) called  
 'I was called an idiot by him.'

Nor can it be argued that the bekommen-passive advances animate objects to 1 whenever such objects occur with a second object. Verbs which occur with an ACC object and a GEN object do not have bekommen-passives, although they may have werden-passives.

- 9k) Man bezichtigte ihn des Mordes.  
 one/NOM accused him/ACC murder/GEN  
 'Someone accused him of murder.'
- 9l) Er wurde des Mordes bezichtigt.  
 he/NOM AUX murder/GEN accused  
 'He was accused of murder.'
- 9m) \*Er bekam des Mordes bezichtigt.  
 NOM AUX GEN

6. GP and MR accept all of these sentences. WV accepts only 10a).

7. I have marked 11a) with ? because there is a problem involved with the case of the animate object. If the object is omitted then the resulting sentence 'Die unmöglichsten Dinge werden gefragt' is perfectly acceptable, so that the point I am trying to make is still valid, i.e. that die unmöglichsten Dinge is a 2 on a transitive stratum at some stage. GP accepts 11a) and rejects it if mir is substituted for mich. MR initially found it difficult to decide between mich (ACC) and mir (DAT). She was not particularly happy with either, although less unhappy with mich. When uns 'us', which has exactly the same morphological form in both ACC and DAT, was substituted, she accepted the sentence without hesitation. WV does not accept any of the sentences in 11). I am at somewhat of a loss to account for the phenomena illustrated in 11). I feel that GP's acceptance of 11a) somehow hangs together with WV's acceptance of 10a) mentioned in the previous footnote, but what the connection is I do not know. Another informant (from Schleswig-Holstein) to whom I put the sentences in 11) also reacted exactly as did GP, although she rejected many of the other sentences in this paper, including many accepted by WV. John Newman (personal communication) has suggested that 11a) is accepted by some people on the basis of syntactic analogy with sentences like:

Die unmöglichsten Dinge werden mir gesagt.  
 'The most impossible things are said to me.'

and that 11a) is not really grammatical. Certainly it is unexpected, whereas 11bc) are not. Another possible account of 11a) is that 3 to 2 advancement applies subsequent to the application of 2 to 1 advancement. This certainly accounts for the facts, but how one would go about demonstrating it I do not know.

8. One occasionally encounters in grammars of German the proposition that German abhors two accusatives and tends to avoid the situation either by using a different verb, e.g. beibringen as in 13), or by changing one of the accusatives to a dative, as in 12d). So for instance Grebe (1973:514): "Da sich das Sprachgefühl gegen die Hinzufügung zweier Akkusativobjekte zu einem Verb wehrt, weicht man ... immer wieder auf die allgemein übliche Grundform mit Dativ- + Akkusativobjekt aus." While the abhorrence theory might account for 12d), it does not account for the DAT in 12b), 11b) and 11c), where there is no ACC to trigger the 'change' from ACC to DAT.

The abhorrence theory seems to me to be saying that 12d) contains one more stratum than 12a), while I claim that the opposite is the case.

9. MR and WV do not accept 15d), while it is accepted by GP and some other native speakers I have asked. This is consistent with the observation in footnote 4.

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