

University of Massachusetts Occasional Papers in Linguistics

Volume 10 *University of Massachusetts
Occasional Papers in Linguistics Volume 10*

Article 6

1986

On Passive and the Notion Subject

Gert Webelhuth

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarworks.umass.edu/umop>



Part of the [Linguistics Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Webelhuth, Gert (1986) "On Passive and the Notion Subject," *University of Massachusetts Occasional Papers in Linguistics*: Vol. 10 , Article 6.

Available at: <https://scholarworks.umass.edu/umop/vol10/iss1/6>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by ScholarWorks@UMass Amherst. It has been accepted for inclusion in University of Massachusetts Occasional Papers in Linguistics by an authorized editor of ScholarWorks@UMass Amherst. For more information, please contact scholarworks@library.umass.edu.

ON PASSIVE AND THE NOTION SUBJECT

Gert Webelhuth

In this paper I will deal with some facts which I believe bear on the question whether there are function-changing syntactic rules or not. There exist two major claims as to this question. Defenders of Lexical-Functional Grammar have argued that all rules that affect or change grammatical functions are lexical (cf. Bresnan 1982), i.e. there are no transformations and in particular no movement transformations in that framework. In the Theory of Government and Binding the explicit claim is made that there are syntactic as well as lexical rules which can affect the grammatical function of lexical items. In the syntax rules which are subsumed under the general rule 'Move α ' move lexical material and thereby create function chains.

The two theories make different predictions as to what the syntactic surface structure of passive sentences look like. In GB the SS will have a trace as is required by the Projection Principle, in LFG there will not be a trace in c-structure, since this is excluded by the principle of direct encoding. These are empirical claims which should be testable.

In section 1. I will present some data of German passive sentences which shed some light on whether there is an NP-position in

* For both academic support and personal friendship I would like to express my deep gratitude to Emmon Bach. It is a pleasure for me to dedicate my paper to a man whose way of thinking has shaped and will go on shaping the thought and work of so many people.

passive verb phrases or not, which will give evidence for the transitivity or intransitivity¹ of passive participles. Section 2. discusses Raising and section 3. a construction which I call "Modal Movement". The final section gives a conclusion.

1. I will not give a detailed description of the two competing theories. I am assuming the version of LFG of Bresnan (1982) and the GB-version of Williams (1981). One essential difference between the two approaches is that in LFG grammatical functions like subject or object are considered theoretical primitives which operate, for example, in lexical entries, whereas in GB-theory grammatical functions are secondary entities which for example in Williams (1981) are not allowed to play a role in morphological or lexical rules. The latter theory defines subject as the external argument of a head, i.e. the unique element of the argument set which appears outside the phrasal category of the head.

The issue as I understand it is as follows: the GB-theory is based on the modules of Case-theory and θ -theory but does not make reference to a primitive set of grammatical relations. The importance of this latter set of primitives for the description of grammatical phenomena in natural language in addition to Case-theory and θ -theory is postulated by the lexical-functional theory. This article is an attempt to inquire into the question of how certain constructions in German are to be analyzed and which central theoretical notions should be invoked for a correct description of the facts. We will focus on the question which role (primitive?) grammatical relations play in the

PASSIVE AND SUBJECT 117

explanation of the German facts and hope to construe an argument for or against their usage in (universal?) lexical rules and annotated phrase structure rules.

In the LFG-theory passives are derived from active verbs by the following rules:

- (1) (SUBJ) ---> O / (VON OBJ)
- (2) (OBJ) ---> (SUBJ)

This is the formulation in Bresnan (1982,20). Hence the result of the rules are intransitive verbal passive participles which permit an agent phrase (this is the von in (1), the equivalent of the English by). Abstracting away from the passive auxiliary and the agent phrase for a moment, LFG predicts that (3) and (4) have the same syntactic encoding:

- (3.3) geschlagen
hit - passive participle
- (3.4) plaudern
talk - intransitive

Both verbs allow a syntactic subject, the auxiliary werden, a von-phrase (by/about) and both verbs disallow an accusative object:

- (5) weil ein Kind (von den Maennern) geschlagen wird
bec. a child by the men hit is
'because a child is hit (by the men)'
- (6) weil ein Kind (von den Maennern) plaudern wird
bec. a child about the men talk will
'because a child will talk (about the men)'

(in (5) wird is the passive auxiliary, in (6) it is the future auxiliary, but this is irrelevant). LFG predicts that (5) and (6) have more or less the same structure², there being no NP-position within the VP and hence no trace in either sentence. Williams' (1981) GB-theory is more restrictive than LFG in that it does not allow lexical rules to refer to grammatical functions. Hence rules like (1) and (2) are excluded in this framework. Rather there are only two ways of changing the argument structure of a lexical item, either by externalizing an argument from the argument set of the item, or by adding a new external argument while internalizing the former external argument. The passive rule in this theory is a rule which vacuously adds an external argument and internalizes the former agent theta-role:

(7) schlagen (A, Pt)
 geschlagen (A, Pt)

(8) plaudern (A, Pt) (the patient-argument is optional)

Since the passive morphology is believed to absorb objective case, the GB-theory predicts that there will be an NP-position in the VP of geschlagen (because of the Projection Principle), which will be empty if no Case can be assigned to it but which can be filled with phononlogical material if the Case-filter is not violated. Hence the GB-theory predicts a representational difference between (5) and (6). Let us now turn to the relevant data.

Let us begin by stating a well-known fact. Although the word order in the VP is quite free, the subject in German is fixed,

PASSIVE AND SUBJECT 119

it is [NP,S]. Between the COMP-node and the subject only time and place adjuncts and clitics can occur in the unmarked word order, but not full NP-or PP-objects:

- (9) weil gestern der Mann die Frau sah
bec. yesterday the man the woman saw
 nom acc
- (10) *weil die Frau der Mann sah
bec. the woman the man saw
 acc nom
- (11) *weil an eine Geschichte ein Mann dachte
bec. of some story a man thought
'because a man thought of some story'

Hence the active nominative subject may not follow other arguments of the verb, or in other words:

- (12) in the unmarked word order the subject may not appear within the VP

This law appears to be broken under special circumstances to which we return below.

Let us now turn to passives.

As in English there are two passives in German, one verbal, one adjectival (cf. Wasow 1977). The difference between these two passives is expressed by the choice of the passive auxiliary. The verbal passives use werden whereas the adjectival ones use sein. We will deal with the verbal passive only, since that is where the two theories make different predictions³. As stated above, LFG claims that there should not be a structural difference between (5) and (6) whereas GB predicts such a difference.

Note the following sentences:

(13) weil von den Maennern ein Kind geschlagen wird

bec. by the men a child hit is

'because a child is hit by the men'

(14)*weil von den Maennern ein Kind plaudern wird

bec. about the men a child talk will

'because a child will talk about the men'

(13), which is a synonymous alternative to (5) breaks our descriptive rule (12) in that the nominative subject of the sentence may be preceded by a PP-object of the verb. But (6) does not have the analogous alternant (14), which suggests that there is a difference between the structures (5) and (6). Given our rule (12), the ungrammaticality of (14) does not come as a surprise - the surprise rather is that (13) is grammatical. Let us try to find out, what the exact position of the nominative in (13) is. To do this we need some marker beacon in German sentences. The adverb gern (gladly) is a verb phrase adverb and may hence not appear before the subject:

(15)*weil gern die Mutter dem Sohn Buecher schenkt

bec. gladly the mother the son books gives
nom dat acc

If gern precedes the dative, the sentence still sounds odd, its normal position being between the indirect and the direct object:

(16) ?? weil die Mutter gern dem Sohn Buecher schenkt
nom dat acc

(17) weil die Mutter dem Sohn gern Buecher schenkt
nom dat acc

Thus we have an ascending acceptability judgement from (15) to

PASSIVE AND SUBJECT 121

(17). Let us compare those sentences with the respective passive sentences:

(18)* weil gern Buecher dem Sohn geschenkt werden

bec. gladly books the son given are
nom dat

(19) ?? weil Buecher gern dem Sohn gegeben werden
nom dat

(20) weil Buecher dem Sohn gern gegeben werden
nom dat

As we can see, the respective passive sentences behave exactly like the active sentences with respect to the position of the adverb. But we saw above that passive subjects break rule (12). We get the same effect with (18) - (20). The nominative subject is allowed to follow the indirect object. Let us see what happens with the adverb:

(18') ?? weil gern dem Sohn Buecher geschenkt werden
dat nom

(20') weil dem Sohn gern Buecher geschenkt werden
dat nom

Interestingly enough sentence (20') is fully grammatical with the VP-adverb preceding the subject. Therefore this passive sentence patterns exactly with the active sentence (17). From that we can infer that the subject of the auxiliary werden is somewhere next to the direct object position of the VP.

Next diagnostic. The German equivalent to English either-or (entweder-oder) can be used in cases of VP-conjunction only in such a way that the entweder follows the subject of the sentence:

(21) weil Paul entweder singt oder tanzt

bec. Paul either sings or dances
nom

	Active subjects	Passive subjects	Direct objects
(i)	must be the leftmost argument of the verb in a sentence	does not have to be the leftmost argument of the verb	must not be the leftmost argument of the verb
(ii)	VP-adverbs must not precede it	VP-adverbs may precede it	same as passive subjects
(iii)	the <u>either</u> of either-or must not precede it	the <u>either</u> may precede it	same as passive subjects
(iv)	the <u>not only</u> of <u>not only</u> <u>but</u> <u>also</u> must not precede it	the <u>not only</u> may precede it	same as passive subjects
(v)	the comparative particles <u>lieber</u> and <u>mehr</u> may not precede it	these particles may precede it	same as passive subjects

PASSIVE AND SUBJECT 123

(vi) must not be con- joined with their verb	may be conjoined with their verb	same as passive subjects
(vii) -	must be next to the verb in <u>Funktions- verbgefuege</u>	same as passive subjects
(viii) -	may be next to the verb in idioms	same as passive subjects
(ix) has nominative case	has nominative case	has accusative case

To sum up: passive subjects behave exactly like active subjects in that they are always assigned nominative case and agree with the finite verb in number and person. No other element in the sentence has those two properties. But active and passive subjects differ radically as to their distribution in the sentence. As (25 ii - viii) show the passive subjects pattern in all cases with the direct object but not with the active subjects. From these facts we can abstract the following generalization:

Subject-generalization

German passive subjects are like active subjects in that they share the defining properties of carrying nominative case and agreeing with the finite verb in number and person, but passive subjects have the option of appearing within the VP and imitating the distribution of direct objects. Active subjects have neither of these properties.

These facts show that there is a difference between the subject of (3) and the subject of (4). Hence LFG makes the wrong prediction, where the GB-theory predicts a difference, the difference between (7) and (8).

Interestingly enough and most important of all the difference between (7) and (8) is exactly mirrored in the structures we have been investigating: geschlagen (hit) has two argu-

124 WEBELHUTH

ments, both of which are internal. There is no external argument. Hence the patient noun phrase is generated in the VP and if it does not get Case, it has to move to a Case-marking position. We saw in (13), (15), (20'), (23) and (24) that it is possible in German to assign nominative case to a passive subject in the VP. Hence the GB-theory predicts that movement is not necessary, precisely the result we have arrived at by investigating the data. But plaudern in (8) has an external argument which may not be generated within the VP and hence (14) and every other similar sentence with an active subject is ungrammatical.

LFG makes a wrong prediction since it will treat sentences like (13) and (14) on a par, since in both cases ein Kind is the subject of both the auxiliary werden and the main verb. Hence both sentences should be grammatical or ungrammatical - which is wrong.

The problems of LFG are rooted in the unified notion of subject which predicts that all subjects will have certain properties in common. LFG-researchers especially try to capture this theorem by annotating their phrase-structure rules with functional terms. The phrase-structure position of a subject is hence derived by stipulation. The German data show that this conception of phrase structure as well as the unified concept of subject is mistaken and should be given up. Word order properties of German do not derive from functional terms like subject or object, but rather from thematic terms, like 'agent, theme, patient' and from categorial terms like 'noun phrase, prepositional phrase'. Passive subjects do not follow the ordering

PASSIVE AND SUBJECT 125

properties of active subjects, since they are generated within the VP and do not have to give up their position due to lack of Case. For some reason Case as a trigger of NP-movement does not exist in German. For precisely this situation the GB - theory predicts that passive subjects follow the word order properties of direct objects rather than active subjects. The German facts prove this conception of syntactic ordering as superior to a system relying on the stipulation of word order with phrase-structure rules annotated with functional terms.

In the rest of this section I will strengthen the assumption that German does not have NP-movement by an investigation of the word order properties of subject-to-subject movement constructions and a construction which I call 'modal movement'.

II. Raising

If we embed an infinitival passive sentence in the verb phrase of the raising verb scheinen (to seem), then GB predicts that raising does not have to take place if the embedded subject gets Case. We saw above that this is possible. LFG predicts that the subject - like that of an intransitive verb - must command its verb on the surface (this holds for all non-ergative active subjects). (26) shows that this is wrong:

(26) es scheint dem Mann ein Buch gegeben zu werden

it seems	the man	a	book	to	be	given
3-sg	dat		nom	3-sg		

'the man seems to be given a book'

ein Buch, the patient-argument of gegeben does not have to move, since it can be Case-marked in situ. Note that it nevertheless

agrees with the matrix verb in number and person: if we make the nominative plural, then the verb also has to show up in its plural form.

But we have another way to show that the subject of scheinen is in its complement. German expresses the to NP in (27) as a dative:

(27a) It seems to him that he is sick

(28) Es scheint ihm, dass er krank ist

This indirect object clearly belongs to the matrix verb in (27), (28), since nothing in the subordinate clause selects a dative object. But now note what happens, if we embed an infinitival in the complement position of scheinen:

(29) hier scheint mir ein Schwein geschlachtet zu werden

here	seems	me	a	pig	slaughtered	to	be
		dat		nom			

(30)

morgen scheint dem Mann die Olympiade zu beginnen

tomorrow	seems	the man	the Olympiad	to begin
		sg	dat	nom sg

(31)

morgen scheinen dem Mann die Olympischen Spiele zu beginnen

tomorrow	seem	the man	the Olympic	games	to begin
		pl	dat	nom pl	

Note again that the nominative follows the dative goal object of scheinen, but that it agrees in number and person with scheinen (note especially the difference between (30) and (31): the nominative and scheinen are both third person singular in (30), but both are third person plural in (31)).

The argument just given is somewhat shaky, since it is not

entirely clear what the relative positions of the goal argument and the nominative NP are. I will therefore give another argument which, if correct, argues for our general assumptions. German has a construction which has been called infinitival pied-piping by van Riemsdijk (1984). In this construction an infinitival S' is moved into the COMP of a relative clause. The infinitival S' displays internal WH-movement. (31a) is derived from (31b):

(31a)

das ist die Tuer, [comp [die PRO [e] abzuschliessen]], er [e] vergass
that is the door which PRO to lock [e] he [e] forgot

(32b)

das ist die Tuer, [[comp e] er [PRO die abzuschliessen] vergass]
that is the door he PRO which to lock forgot

Although the whole S' can move into the COMP of the relative clause, this is not necessary. It is always possible for the relative pronoun to move while leaving behind its infinitival sentence. Thus we get both (32c) and 32d):

(32c)

das Buch [[das PRO zu lesen] er [e] vorhat]
the book which PRO to read he [e] intends

(32d)

das Buch [[das] er [PRO [e] zu lesen] vorhat]
the book which he PRO [e] to read intends

Note now, what happens, if we exchange a raising verb for the control verb 'intend':

128 WEBELHUTH

(32e)

* das Buch [[das PRO [e] zu lesen] er [e] scheint]
 the book which PRO [e] to read he [e] seems

(32f)

das Buch [[das] er [PRO [e] zu lesen] scheint]
 the book which he PRO [e] to read seems

With the raising verb only the extraction of the relative pronoun alone is possible. The extraction of the whole sentence leads to ungrammaticality. This is presumably due to the fact that there does not exist an S' in this situation at all, given S'-deletion. But this is a theory-internal argument, since proponents of LFG do not accept this concept anyway. For them the underlying structures of (32c) and (32e) should have exactly the same form: er is the subject of the relative clause (it agrees with the verb of the relative clause) and the verb of the relative clause takes a V-COMP as its complement. But then there is no reason whatsoever, why only one of the V-COMPs can pied-pieped into the COMP of the relative clause. In neither case are Binding-principles or locality constraints violated as can be concluded from the fact that the relative pronoun alone can be extracted. The difference in grammaticality of (32c) and (32e) therefore remains unexplained.

In our framework it is easy to explain why the construction with the control verb is grammatical but the analogous one with the raising verb is bad. In the control structure er is the

PASSIVE AND SUBJECT 129

subject of the higher verb, controlling the lower subject. Hence the er will be left behind when the S' is moved into COMP. In the raising case however the er belongs to the V-COMP itself, since German does not have NP-movement. If only the whole argument complex can be pied-piped into the relative COMP, then the er may not be left behind. Therefore (32e) must be ungrammatical. There is no rule which would derive such a structure. But the er may not be moved along with its verb etc. either, since then it will violate the Case-filter, because it will not be governed by the INFL of the relative clause any more. It therefore follows that the subject of the complement of the raising verb cannot occupy the subject position of the raising verb. For then, sentence (32e) should be as grammatical as (32c) under an LFG-analysis which it isn't.

Result: like passive subjects, subjects of raising verbs show the defining properties of subjects: they bear nominative case and the raising verb agrees with them in number and gender. Distributionally they differ sharply from active subjects, in that they do not have to command the verbs they agree with in the surface string, but only the verbs to whose argument set they belong.

III. Modal Movement

Since by now the reader is acquainted with the course of the argument, I will restrict myself to giving simply the data that show that modal subjects pattern with passive subjects and raising subjects in that they also show properties (ix) and (xi) in (25), i.e. the defining properties of subjects, but that they also do not command the verbs they agree with in number and

130 WEBELHUTH

person, but rather the verbs they are selected by⁴:

(32) Gestern waren dem Lehrer die Buecher sauber abzugeben

yesterday was the teacher the books clean to hand in
pl dat nom pl

'yesterday the books were to be handed in to the teacher'

(33) Es bleiben allein die Ergebnisse der naechsten
it remain only the results of the next
3-pl nom pl

Bundestagswahlen abzuwarten

federal elections to await

'all that remains to do is to await the results of the
next federal elections'

IV. Conclusion

In this paper I have examined some constructions from German in order to determine which grammatical primitives are suitable to predict their behavior. The main question was whether the two grammatical sub-theories Case-theory and θ -theory which are considered necessary both in LFG and GB are sufficient to account for the facts or whether a third set of grammatical primitives - grammatical relations - have to be invoked, as assumed in LFG but not in GB.

The facts discussed seem to show that a description of the German verbal passive in terms of a universal passive rule containing grammatical relations as in (1) and (2) above in conjunction with functionally annotated phrase-structure rules is

PASSIVE AND SUBJECT 131

inadequate. For purposes of German word order grammatical functions seem to be irrelevant, whereas an interplay of thematic notions and notions of abstract Case can easily handle the facts.⁵ In this respect functionally annotated phrase-structure rules are not only superfluous, but create a dilemma. The primitive unified notion SUBJECT in the rules wrongly generalizes from one type of subject to other types, e.g. from agentive SUBJECTS to thematic SUBJECTS. To prevent the functionally annotated phrase-structure rules from this overgeneralization, SUBJECTS will have to be specified for their thematic value in the rewriting rules. But this move of course makes the functional annotation of the phrase-structure rules unnecessary. Other evidence for the relevance of primitive grammatical relations in grammatical theory will have to be found.

Footnotes

** Thanks go to David Pesetsky, Edwin Williams, Hans den Besten and an anonymous reviewer for helpful comments on an earlier draft of this paper. Emmon Bach contributed one of the diagnostics and it was Barbara Partee who generated my interest in passive. Thanks to Armin Mester, Angelika Kratzer and Sabine Bergler for their judgements. I alone am responsible for remaining mistakes.

1. I am using the term transitivity here to mean that there is an NP-position in the VP, which gets the patient- θ -role. For a discussion of the meaning of the notion transitive, cf. Williams (1984).

Although I am dealing only with German in this paper, the same argument could be made on the basis of Dutch data, cf. the works by den Besten and Hoekstra in the bibliography.

132 WEBELHUTH

2. I picked the verb plaudern because it happens to select the preposition von and therefore it can be substituted for a passive verb in some sentences. There are other such verbs, in particular verbs which have an external thematic subject, cf.

(i)* weil von Nuessen Kinder leben werden

bec. of nuts children live will
nom

'because children will live on nuts'

That leben does not have an external agent can be concluded from the fact that it does not passivize:

(ii)* weil nach dem Unfall von dem Opfer gelebt wurde

bec. after the accident by the victim lived was

Other examples are hoeren (hear) and traeumen (dream):

(iii)*weil von Einhoernern oft Kinder traeumen

bec. of unicorns often children dream
nom

'because children often dream of unicorns'

traeumen also does not have an impersonal passive:

(iv)* weil von einem Kind von einem Bonbon getraeumt wird

bec. by a child of a sweet dreamed is

3. Contrary to what I am saying in the text it is not clear beyond doubt that German really has only one sein (be)-passive. First of all German has some seven constructions which could be called passive (cf. Hoehle (1978), chapter 2 in a lexicalist framework). As long as they are not run through reliable constituency tests etc. their status is quite unclear. The same holds true for the sein-passive. Hoekstra (1984; 202, 210) for example argues that the Dutch statal passive is not adjectival and his arguments carry over to German.

Contrary to both the standard view that the statal passive is always adjectival and Hoekstra's view that it is always an intermediate category between adjectives and verbs the following German data suggests that the statal passive is simply ambiguous:

(i) weil Peter davon ueberzeugt ist

bec. Peter of that convinced is
nom

(i) has an egressive (i.e. resultative) reading and a purely

PASSIVE AND SUBJECT 133

statal reading, i.e. the sentence either describes the state resulting from somebody's convincing Peter or simply describes the fact that Peter is convinced of something, maybe without cause, maybe because he was always convinced of it etc. A similar example would be the following:

(ii) weil Maria informiert ist

bec. Maria informed is
nom

The sentence has two readings. It can either mean that Maria has just been informed about something (e.g. the result of the papal election) by somebody, such that now she is informed about this issue or it can mean that Maria is in general well-informed, maybe because she's reading a lot or is interested in politics etc.

If we now assume that the purely statal reading is adjectival whereas the egressive one is verbal, then the theory of thematic roles presented in Webelhuth (1985a) (which also contains a discussion of psych-verbs, an issue we cannot go into here for lack of space) predicts that the "egressive" subject will be internal, while the "statal" one will be external. To my and several informant's ears the following sentences seem to support this prediction:

(iii) [das Hotel gestrichen] wurde schon gestern

the hotel painted was already yesterday

(iv) [das Hotel gestrichen] war schon gestern

the hotel painted was already yesterday

(v) [das Hotel gestrichen] wurde in jedem Sommer

the hotel painted was in every summer

(vi)* [das Hotel gestrichen] war in jedem Sommer

the hotel painted was in every summer

(iv) can only have the egressive reading, since the temporal adjunct is incompatible with the statal reading. (vi) cannot be interpreted at all, since the frequentative temporal adjunct is incompatible with the egressive reading. This leaves the statal reading. But by hypothesis this is only possible, if the subject is external - this means that we have fronted a non-constituent in (vi) and the sentence is ungrammatical. Compare (vi) to the following sentences:

(vii) [das Hotel] war in jedem Sommer gestrichen

the hotel was in every summer painted

134 WEBELHUTH

whose truth conditions would be satisfied in a situation where I have gone on vacation to Italy each summer and although I have never seen anybody paint the hotel I was staying at, the hotel nevertheless was always painted.

Here is another minimal pair:

- | | |
|----------------------------|---------------------|
| (viii) (a) Er war gebildet | (b) Er war gebildet |
| it was formed | He was learned |

gebildet is ambiguous. It can either be the participle of the verb bilden (to form) in which case sentence (a) could mean "it [i.e. the circle;GW] was formed"; or it is the equivalent of the English word learned and the sentence has the meaning "he was/used to be learned". Our theory clearly predicts that only the participle gebildet as in (a) above can be fronted together with its subject, whereas the homophonous form gebildet as used in (b) should not be usable like that. The clear contrast between the following two sentences suggests that this is in fact true:

- (ix) [der Kreis gebildet] was schon nach kurzer Zeit
the circle formed was already after a short period
- (x)* [der Junge gebildet] war schon in fruehester Kindheit
the boy learned was already in earliest childhood

4. Note that this construction differs somewhat from English Tough-movement. In German one can (tough-) move dative and genitive objects which although appearing before the tough-word do not agree in number and person with the copula:

- (i) diesem Mann ist leicht zu helfen
this man is easy to help
dat

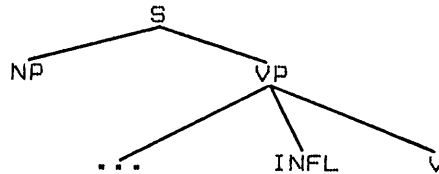
Also the German construction has some modal properties English Tough-movement lacks.

All I am interested in in the main text is to show that if a patient argument becomes the subject of the main clause copula, then it may remain in the subordinate clause. It does not, unlike active subjects, have to command the copula in main clauses!

5. There has been work recently on how to parametrize Case-theory in such a way that the Case-assignment properties for languages like English, French, Italian and German follow, cf. Chomsky (1981) for discussion and references. For German cf. den Besten (1978), (1982). In Webelhuth (1985a; 116) and Webelhuth

(1985b; 3) I propose the following sentence structure for German:

(i)



This explains

"why in German we find the infinitive marker zu (to) which I take to be in INFL, to the left of the verb. This is the only pure INFL-element that German has, the auxiliaries being pure verbs. This will also explain why the negation element nicht occurs left-adjacent to the verbal complex. As in English we take it to be in INFL. This structure might also bring some further light into the question what verb raising is triggered by, if the verb is raised into INFL, verb raising could be described as a structure-preserving operation."
Webelhuth (1985a; 144)

Case-assignment to the external argument is compositional, like external θ -assignment. For other predictions of (i) for German cf. Webelhuth (1985a)

That NP-movement is not necessary in German follows from this theory. For this prediction cf. Chomsky (1984; 222 fn. 96):

"Recall that this [movement into the subject position; G.W.] is not required if the complement requires no Case -- e.g., if it is a clause rather than an NP -- or if the language permits some other mode of assigning Case".

Thiersch (1978) already argues that German passive does not involve movement.

Bibliography

- Andrews, A. (1982), "The Representation of Case in Modern Icelandic", In Bresnan (1982)
- den Besten, H. (1978), "Government, syntaktische Struktur und Kasus". in Kohrt/Lenerz (eds), (1978), Sprache, Formen und Strukturen. Niemeyer
- (1981), "A Case Filter for Passives", in A. Belletti, L. Brandi and L. Rizzi eds., Theory of Markedness

136 WEBELHUTH

- in Generative Grammar, Scuola Superiore di Pisa
- (1982), "Some Remarks on the Ergative Hypothesis".
ms. U of Amsterdam
- (1983), extended version of den Besten (1982). To appear in
Toman, J. Issues in the Grammar of German. Foris
- Bresnan, J., ed. (1982), The Mental Representation of Grammatical
Relations. MIT-Press
- Chomsky, N. (1981), Lectures on Government and Binding. Foris
- (1984), Knowledge of Language: Its Nature, Origins and Use. To
appear
- Hoehle, T. (1978), Lexikalistische Syntax. Niemeyer Verlag
- Hoekstra, T. (1984), Transitivity. Foris
- Reis, M. (undated), "Zum Subjektbegriff im Deutschen"
- v. Riemsdijk, H. (1983), "On pied-piped infinitives in German
relative clauses". To appear in J. Toman (ed), Issues in the
Grammar of German. Foris
- Stowell, T. (1981), Origins of Phrase Structure. MIT-dissertation
- Thiersch, C. (1978), Topics in German Syntax. MIT-dissertation
- Wasaw, T. (1977), "Transformations and the Lexicon", in
Culicover, Wasow and Akmajian eds., Formal Syntax. Academic
Press
- Webelhuth, Gert, (1985a), "Complementation and Word Order" ms. U Mass
- (1985b), "German is configurational". Talk at the Symposium on
Germanic Linguistics - CLS Chicago 1985. Distributed by IULC
- Williams, E., (1981), "Argument Structure and Morphology". The
Linguistic Review 1
- (1984), "Grammatical Relations". LI 15.4