A NON-CONVERSION APPROACH TO DATIVE-NOMINATIVE CONVERSION IN GERMANIC

Synopsis: In this talk, I discuss two phenomena recently analyzed as involving inherent/lexical-nominative (IN/LEX-NOM) conversion under syntactic movement: -st anticausative in Icelandic (Wood 2013, cf. Alexiadou, Anagnostopoulou and Sevdali (AAS) 2013) and bekomen/krijgen ‘get’ passive in German/Dutch (AAS 2013). I nevertheless argue for the original claim (Zaenen, Maling and Thráinsson (ZMT) 1985, Freidin and Sprouse 1991) that in languages like German/Icelandic, inherent/lexical case is retained in all syntactic contexts. Hence I propose a base-generation analysis of nominative DPs, which provides a unified account of inherent/lexical case in Germanic.

Issue: Icelandic anticausativization via -st bleeds inherent dative case from internal arguments, so that the prima facie promoted subject gets nominative case as in transitive (1a) vs. anticausative (1b).

   Ásta.NOM shattered window.the.DAT rýðunni.NOM window.the.NOM shattered.ST
   ‘Ásta shattered the window.’ (Wood 2013) ‘The window shattered.’ (Wood 2013)

German bekomen passive also constitutes a case where apparently, a dative indirect object becomes a nominative subject, which is impossible with usual werden ‘be’ passive as in transitive (2a) vs. passive (2b).

2. a. Er hat ihm den Ball geschenkt. b. Er bekam/*wurde den Ball geschenkt.
   he.NOM has her.DAT the.ACC ball given he.NOM got/*be the.ACC ball given
   ‘He has given her the ball.’ ‘He was given the flowers.’

However, in Germanic, inherent/lexical case is always preserved except in the above two cases. For instance, passivization of a dative object, among others (e.g. raising, ECM), results in a dative subject in Icelandic (ZMT 1985).

Proposal/Analysis 1—Anticausative in Icelandic: Following Svenonius (2006) and Wood (2013), I assume that -st is a pronominal clitic. Contra Wood (2013), I however propose that it is an individual place holder (i.e. type e) with no referent, which is generated in the argument position associated with the nominative argument as in (4a). As shown in (4b), -st moves to Spec-vP, which, assuming movement corresponds to λ-abstraction, derives a predicate of type <e,f>. vP then merges with the nominative argument, which binds the variable created by movement, and thus associates the nominative DP with the object theta role. Finally, assuming that -st does not need Case due to its clitic nature (Wood 2012, cf. Baker 1988), dative is never assigned in (4), hence no IN/LEX-NOM conversion.

4. a. [e v0 [vP splundraði -st]] ➞ b. [e -st1 [v0 [vP splundraði st1]] ➞ c. [e ráðan [v0 [vP splundraði st1]]]

Argument for base-generation: The analysis correctly predicts that in addition to dative, lexical case in general ‘disappears’ in anticausativization. (5) shows that genitive also appears to be converted to nominative, which requires the stipulation of multiple instances of v in other accounts (e.g. Sigurðsson 2012), but it falls out of the base-generation analysis proposed here without further assumptions.

5. a. þær óska hennar. b. Hún óskast.
   they.NOM wish.for her/it.GEN she/it.NOM wishes.ST
   ‘They wish for her/it.’ (Sigurðsson 2012) ‘She/It is being sought/wished for/wished.’ (Sigurðsson 2012)

Another argument for base-generation comes from anticausativization with ditransitive verbs, which retains dative as in (6). If, by whatever means, -st absorbs dative case, the difference between (1) and (6) is unexpected and further assumptions are necessary to distinguish between the different dative constructions. The account here extends straightforwardly to (6): -st is base-generated in the direct object position, hence nothing affects the lexical dative
assigned to the indirect object (NB. Icelandic is V2 and a nominative DP can also be sentence-initial, ZMT 1985).

(6) a. Fölk leyfði þeim alla hluti. b. Þeim eyfóust allir fullir.
   people.NOM allowed them.DAT all things.ACC them.DAT allowed.HT all things.NOM
   ‘People allowed them all things.’ (Thránisson 2007)  ‘They were allowed all things.’ (Thránisson 2007)

Proposal/Analysis 2—bekommen/krijgen passive in German/Dutch: I propose that bekommen/krijgen passive in German/Dutch is also best accounted for via base-generation of the nominative DP rather than IN/LEX-NOM conversion. AAS (2013) only provides data from low applicative in the sense of Pyllkkänen (2002, 2008) (i.e. the relation between two individuals, but bekommen and krijgen passives in fact go as well with high applicative with benefactive interpretations. In (7a) and (7b), the nominative DP is benefactively affected by the hair-being-cut-by-the-hairdresser event and the door-being-opened-by-him event, respectively, so that I propose that the Appl(icative) head in (8) takes vP as its complement as shown in (9a) and (9b) for (2b) and (7), respectively.

(7) a. Sie bekam das Haar vom Friseur geschnitten.
   she.NOM get/receive.PST.3SG the.ACC hair by.the.DAT hairdresser cut
   ‘She got her hair cut by the hairdresser.’ (adapted from Diedrichsen 2004)

b. Die Dame bekam von ihm die Tür geöffnet.
   the.NOM lady got by him.DAT the.ACC door opened
   ‘He opened the door for the lady.’ (Wilkinson 1983)

(8) \[[\text{Appl}^0_{\text{High}}] = \lambda x.\lambda s. \text{App}l(x)s, \text{where App}l = \text{App}l_{\text{BEN}}, \text{App}l_{\text{MAL}}, \text{and so forth.} (s = \text{the set of eventualities})

(9) a. \[\text{[Appl}^0_{\text{High}} \text{ER-NOM}_1 [\text{VP} [\text{den Ball}] - \text{ACC}_2 [\text{Appl}^0_{\text{Low}} \text{PRO}-\text{DAT}_1 \text{geschenkt}] v^0] \text{App}l^0 (= \text{bekommen})\]

b. \[\text{[Appl}^0 \text{Sie/Die Dame-NOM}_1 [\text{VP} [\text{das Haar/die Tür}] - \text{ACC}_2 [\text{VP}_2 \text{geschenkt/geöffnet}] v^0] \text{App}l^0 (= \text{bekommen})\]

In (9), I abstract away from the by-phrases that are associated with embedded v^0. The present analysis, unlike AAS (2013), does not treat bekommen and krijgen as a pure passive auxiliary, and I propose that they are flavored as benefactive or malefactive (Pyllkkänen 2002, 2008). In addition, I argue that these flavors can vary across languages and even within a language. Some German speakers therefore do not like bekommen passive with verbs of deprival (Diedrichsen 2004) whereas others tolerate it (AAS 2013), and Dutch in contrast excludes krijgen passive with verbs of deprival across the board (Broekhuis and Cornips 2012), which can be implemented in the current proposal by the lexical restriction that Dutch does not have Appl^0_{MAL}.

Consequence—fá passive in Icelandic: The proposed analysis of bekommen passive can be extended to fá passive in Icelandic, for which E. F. Sigurdsson and Wood (SW) (2012) also propose an account involving base-generation of the nominative subject in the external argument position (i.e. Spec-VoiceP for SW). Just like bekommen/krijgen passive, the dative object of the ditransitive verb in (10a), if fá-passivized, prima facie becomes the nominative subject as in (10b), but as discussed above, Icelandic dative case is not bled under A-movement in general.

(10) a. Jón sendi Maríu bókina.
   Jón.NOM sent Maia.DAT book.the.ACC
   Maria.NOM got book.the.ACC sent PASS.ACC
   ‘Jón sent Maria the book.’ (SW 2012)  ‘Maria got the book sent to her.’ (SW 2012)

Although SW’s analysis is congenial to the spirit of my analysis, there are two facts left unexplained for SW’s proposal: 1. One is that Icelandic cannot have malefactive interpretation, and 2. the other is that fá is necessarily associated with the causative reading for the nominative subject, whence (10b) must be understood as something like “Maria caused the book to be sent (to her).” These facts are explained under my analysis. For 1. Icelandic, like Dutch, simply lacks Appl^0_{MAL} in its lexical inventory; for 2. I propose that ApplP (High) is further selected by a causative/agent-introducing head such as v^0 or Voice^0 as in (11) (note that for SW, Voice^0 is just an external-argument introducer). The 0-roles of Appl^0 and v/Voice^0 are checked by first merging the nominative subject to Spec-ApplP (High) and then moving it to Spec-vP/VoiceP as in (11) (cf. Hornstein 1999).

(11) \[\text{VPVoice}_0 \text{Maia-NOM}_1 v^0/\text{Voice}^0 [\text{Appl}^0_{\text{High}} t_1 \text{Appl}^0_{\text{BEN}} (= fá) [\text{VP} \text{bókina-ACC}_2 v^0 [\text{Appl}^0_{\text{LOW}} \text{PRO}-\text{DAT}_1 \text{senda}_2 t_2]_2]]

Conclusion: My account of (1)/(2) does not have recourse to IN/LEX-NOM conversion, so that we can keep a unified and simple picture of inherent/lexical case in Germanic. [Sel. Ref.: Wood, J. 2013. Reflexive -st verbs in Icelandic.]