

German Passives and English Benefactives: The Need for Non-canonical Accusative Case

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Abstract

In both English benefactive constructions (*John baked Mary a cake*) and German *kriegen/bekommen*-passives (*Er kriegte einen Stift geschenkt* ‘He got a pen gifted’), the theme argument is accusative-marked but has no (immediately obvious) way of getting structural accusative case. In English benefactive constructions, this is because the beneficiary argument intervenes between the voice head and the theme, and in German *kriegen/bekommen*-passives, it is because there is no active voice head. This paper proposes that, in both languages, the applicative head introducing the beneficiary/recipient (more generally, the affectee argument), comes with an extra case feature that can license case on the theme argument. In English, this non-canonical accusative case feature comes with the regular applicative head introducing the beneficiary argument. In contrast, in German, it comes with a defective applicative head which introduces the recipient but is unable to assign to it the inherent dative case that normally comes with the Affectee theta-role. The paper offers a unified analysis of English and German double object constructions and also of German *werden* (‘be’) and *kriegen/bekommen* (‘get’)-passives.

1. Introduction¹

This paper explores the use of non-canonical accusative (ACC) case marking in German and English and thereby aims to explain the unexpected ACC case on the direct object in two different double object constructions, English benefactives and German *kriegen/bekommen* (‘get’)-passives. The latter is also known as “recipient passive”. These constructions are illustrated in (1a) and (2), respectively.

- (1) a. John baked Mary **a cake**.
b. John baked a cake.
- (2) Er kriegte **einen Stift** geschenkt.
he got a.ACC pen gifted
‘He got a pen as a gift.’

In the English benefactive construction in (1), the indirect object *Mary* gets structural ACC case from the active voice head/agentive *v* because it is the higher of the two objects. The question is how the lower direct object gets its ACC case. Unlike ditransitive verbs that obligatorily select for two internal arguments (e.g. *give*, *show*, *lend*), benefactives like *bake* can be used with just a direct object as in (1b) or with no object at all. Given the passivization possibility of monotransitive *bake* (*A cake was baked*), the direct object in (1b) cannot be case-marked lexically, by V. It must be getting structural ACC case from agentive *v*. To avoid positing different lexical entries for *bake* depending on how many objects it is used with, the V in (1a) shouldn’t come with a lexical ACC case feature either. What kind of ACC case do we have then in (1a)?

Similarly, in (2), we have an ACC-marked direct object for which neither structural nor lexical ACC case should be available. It can’t be canonical structural case because we have a passive construction here, with a passive voice/defective *v* head, which, according to Burzio’s (1986) generalization, neither

¹ We thank an anonymous reviewer whose detailed and well-explained feedback (with lots of examples and relevant references) was immensely helpful. Of course, we take full responsibility for any remaining errors and oversights.



introduces an external argument nor has the ability to license structural ACC case. It also can't be lexical case because the ACC case-marking on the direct object of the same verb, *schenken*, alternates with nominative (NOM) case-marking under *werden* ('be')-passivization, as in *Ein Stift wurde ihm geschenkt* ('A pen was given to him as a gift'). This alternation would wrongly be predicted to be impossible if the direct object were lexically case-marked.

Sections 2 and 3 deal with these data and questions in more detail and provide a unified analysis of the two phenomena. We flesh out this analysis theoretically, not only for the *kriegen/bekommen* ('get')-passive but also for the standard German *werden* ('be')-passive, in section 4 by proposing that the applicative (affectee) head introducing the beneficiary in English and the recipient in German comes with an additional (non-canonical) case feature and that this feature spells out as ACC. Section 5 addresses dependent case as a potential alternative approach, and section 6 concludes the paper.

2. English benefactives: *Bake*-type versus *give*-type verbs

Bosse (2015) posits a semantic distinction between benefactive (*bake*-type) and ditransitive (*give*-type) constructions, with the difference in meaning resulting from two different lexical entries for argument-introducing (applicative) heads, REC and BEN. The analysis of benefactives we propose here is roughly in line with this distinction because case marking of the theme/patient argument, the direct object, works differently in benefactive versus ditransitive constructions. In our analysis, this case-marking difference falls out from distinct sets of formal features that the two applicative heads come with.

Ditransitives like *give*, *show*, and *lend* (which we'll call "true ditransitives") obligatorily select for two internal arguments and necessarily assert a transfer of possession of the theme/patient (direct object, henceforth D.O.) to the goal/recipient (indirect object, henceforth I.O.). When occurring in a Double Object Construction (DOC), the I.O. c-commands the D.O., and under passivization only the I.O. can become the subject, i.e. move to Spec TP and get NOM-case-marked. These facts are shown in (3a) and (b), respectively.

- (3) a. I gave Mary a book. / *I gave Mary. / *I gave a book.
 b. Mary was given a book. / *A book was given Mary. / *A book was given.

The D.O. in true ditransitive constructions can be argued to be lexically case-licensed by V (see Anagnostopoulou 2003 or Twiner 2016 for a thorough overview of the relevant literature). This means that the few verbs falling into the true ditransitive category come with a lexical ACC case feature as part of their lexical entry, ensuring that the D.O., which is too low in the structure to get structural ACC case from agentive *v*, has a chance to get case-licensed.

In contrast to true ditransitives, benefactives like *bake*, *cook*, and *make* only optionally take an I.O. This I.O. can thus be thought of as an optional addition to the predicate and be analyzed as an applicative argument in the sense that the applied argument, *Mary* in (1a), repeated here as (4), benefits from the predicate.

- (4) John baked Mary a cake.

Despite being an optional addition to the predicate, the I.O. interrupts structural ACC case-licensing on the D.O. We know this because under passivization, when the derivation includes a passive and thus ACC-case-lacking voice head (defective *v*) rather than an active voice head (agentive *v*), it is not the D.O. but the I.O. that becomes the NOM-marked subject and thus participates in structural ACC-NOM case alternation.

- (5) Mary was baked a cake. / *A cake was baked Mary.

In *bake*-sentences without an intervening beneficiary I.O., the theme D.O. becomes the subject under passivization.

(6) A cake was baked.

This means that an active monotransitive benefactive construction should be represented as in Figure 1.

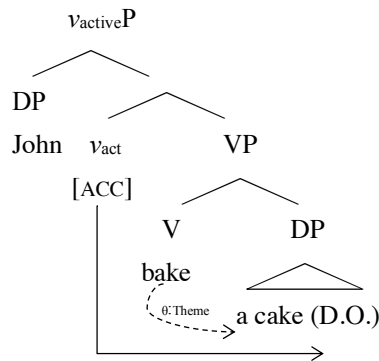


Figure 1: Active monotransitive benefactive construction: *John baked a cake*.²

In *bake*-sentences with a beneficiary, i.e. an intervening I.O., it is this more local DP that gets structural ACC from the active voice head. In that case, the theme argument, the D.O., still needs to have its case feature valued. If we posited a second structural ACC case feature on v or a lexical ACC case feature on V, we would overgenerate the number of possible ACC arguments in monotransitive active sentences. Lexical ACC case-marking would prevent the theme from becoming the subject and thus from participating in ACC-NOM structural case alternation in monotransitive passives, counter to fact (see (6)). And in DOC passives, multiple structural ACC features on v would leave the passive v with one of its ACC features. This extra ACC feature would case-license the higher of the two internal arguments, the beneficiary I.O., rather than the theme D.O., again, counter to fact (see (5)).

All this leads us to propose that it must be the introduction of the beneficiary argument that licenses the case of the theme. If there is no I.O., no extra ACC case feature can be present (**Was baked a cake*). In line with Hallman (2015), we argue that the case of the theme is licensed by the applicative head. Unlike Hallman, we argue that this case is assigned via Agree with the same timing as structural ACC is assigned by active v . As soon as the applicative head is merged, it enters into an Agree relationship with the theme DP and values its case feature. This is illustrated in Figure 2.

² The verb gets its past tense inflection (*baked*) via feature valuation by T after moving to the active voice head (V-to- v).

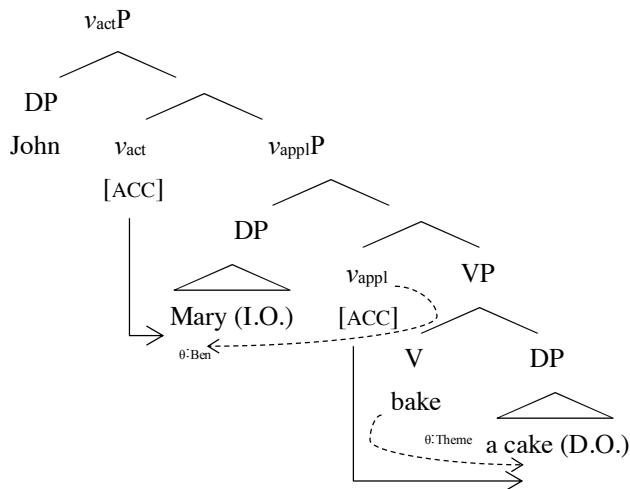


Figure 2: Active benefactive DOC: *John baked Mary a cake*.³

Thus, in our analysis, benefactives in English are high applicative constructions (contra Pylkkänen 2008) and make use of a non-canonical ACC case feature assigned by the beneficiary-introducing applicative head. In Figure 2, we have represented the case assigned by v_{appl} as [ACC] since English only has ACC and NOM case, but this may be an instantiation of abstract case, which is spelled out as ACC morphologically, at PF. Marantz (1991, 2000), McFadden (2004), and Baker and Vinokurova (2010) pick up on the same theory, though with a much different implementation, namely dependent case. We briefly discuss this alternative approach to our non-canonical ACC in section 5.

In passive *bake*-sentences, with a passive voice head, our non-canonical ACC case feature on the applicative head still licenses the theme, but the beneficiary, now lacking structural ACC case, moves to Spec,TP and gets NOM case-marked, as shown in Figure 3.

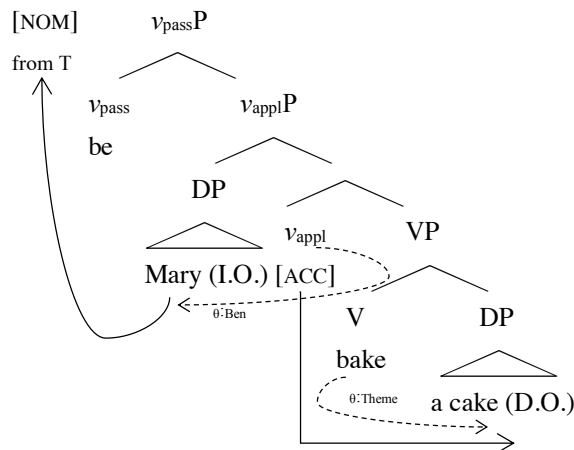


Figure 3: Passive benefactive DOC: *Mary was baked a cake*.⁴

³ The verb head-moves up to the active voice head (V-to-v-to-v), gets its inflection (*baked*) via feature valuation by T, and immediately follows the subject *John*.

⁴ Passive *be* gets its past tense inflection (*was*) via feature valuation by T, and the main V gets its past participle form (*baked*) via feature valuation by the passive voice head after moving to the applicative head (V-to-v).

In section 3, we propose that ACC case-marking in German *kriegen/bekommen*-passive constructions can be explained along the same lines. There will be an affectee-argument-introducing applicative head that assigns non-canonical ACC case to the theme argument (D.O.), which would otherwise not be case-licensed. The difference between our analysis of English benefactives and our analysis of German *kriegen/bekommen*-passives is that, in the latter, the non-canonical ACC case comes from a defective applicative head.

3. Passivization possibilities in German Double Object Constructions

3.1 Background on German DOCs

In line with Bruening (2010), Bosse (2015), and Lee-Schoenfeld and Diewald (2017), Lee-Schoenfeld (2018) argues that German DOCs are high applicative constructions (again, contra Pylkkänen 2008). Furthermore, following Woolford (2006) and adopting certain parts of Grewendorf (2002) and Haider (2010) (but contra Müller 1995 and Anagnostopoulou 2003), Lee-Schoenfeld argues for a case-theoretic account wherein structural ACC case is assigned by the external-argument-introducing active voice (agentive *v*) head (as expected given Burzio 1986 and Kratzer 1996 among others), and dative (DAT) is assigned as inherent (predictable) case by the applicative (affectee *v*), not as lexical (idiosyncratic) case by V. Crucially, the inherent DAT case assignment we discuss here only occurs when it's predictable, i.e. goes hand in hand with an Affectee (animate co-participant) theta-role, not when it's exceptional or idiosyncratic with verbs like *jemanden.ACC etwas.DAT aussetzen* ('expose someone to something') and *jemanden.ACC etwas.DAT unterziehen* ('subject someone to something'). This latter type of case is lexical and thus assigned by the V itself (see Lee-Schoenfeld 2018: 197).

We assume the base structure for active DOCs in German shown in Figure 4 (adapted from Lee-Schoenfeld 2018: 195, see also McFadden 2006 and McIntyre 2006).

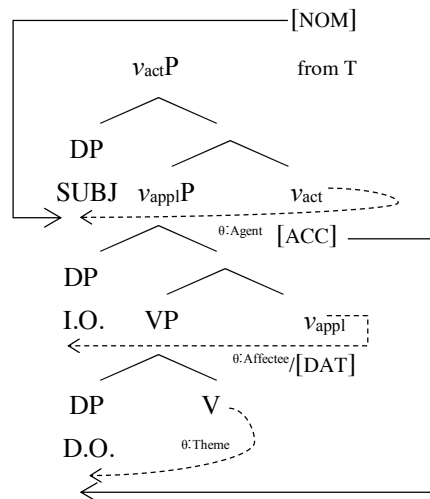


Figure 4: Base configuration for active DOC in German⁵

The DAT case is assigned to the DP in the specifier of the applicative head (the I.O.) inherently, i.e. hand in hand with the Affectee theta-role. The I.O. is therefore not in the way of structural ACC case-licensing from

⁵ The non-curved dotted line from the applicative head to the I.O. represents inherent case assignment going hand in hand with the discharge of a certain theta-role. Here, [DAT] is assigned together with the Affectee-role.

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the active voice head down to the D.O. Having already been case-licensed, the I.O. is invisible for the structural-case-licensing agentive *v*. This is why ACC case can skip the affectee DP and go straight down to the theme DP, which is still in need of case.

3.2 *Passivization options*

3.2.1 *The standard werden ('be')-passive*

German passives are typically formed from the auxiliary *werden* (literally 'become') and the past participle form of the main verb. The theme can't get structural ACC case because, as we know from English passives, the passive voice (defective *v*) head lacks this case feature. The theme therefore gets NOM case from T. Unlike in English DOC passives, if an I.O. is present, this higher internal argument doesn't get structural NOM case but maintains the inherent DAT case it is assigned by the applicative head. This difference between the languages simply stems from the fact that English no longer has a DAT case. An example of a German DOC passive formed with *werden* is given in (7).

- (7) *Er wurde einen Stift geschenkt. / Ihm wurde ein Stift geschenkt.
he.NOM was a.ACC pen gifted / him.DAT was a.NOM pen gifted
'He was given a pen as a gift.'

The I.O. affectee argument, here a recipient, not undergoing DAT-NOM case alternation speaks for this DAT case indeed being inherent, not structural case.

3.2.2 *The less formal kriegen/bekommen ('get')-passive*

In addition to the well-studied *werden*-passive just discussed, German (like Dutch) can form passives with the verbal elements *kriegen* or *bekommen* ('get'),⁶ which are also combined with a participial main verb (see e.g. Reis 1985, Wegener 1985, and Leirbukt 1997). Unlike in *werden*-passives, the theme argument (D.O.) in *kriegen/bekommen*-passives does not get NOM case-licensed. Instead, it's the recipient argument (I.O.) that gets structural NOM case, and the theme argument gets ACC case-marked (hence the term 'recipient passive'). We saw this in example (2) of the introduction, which is repeated here as (8).⁷

- (8) Er kriegte einen Stift geschenkt. / *Ihm kriegte ein Stift geschenkt.
he.NOM got a.ACC pen gifted / him.DAT got a.NOM pen gifted
'He got a pen as a gift.'

This case-marking situation resembles that of the English DOC passive, discussed in section 2. Similarly to DOC verbs in English that are not true ditransitives, German *schicken* ('give as a gift') can't be assumed to have lexical ACC to assign to the D.O. Thus, (8), which is the exact opposite of (7) in terms of case-

⁶ Whether German speakers use *kriegen* or *bekommen* (or even *erhalten*; see Haider 1984, 1986) for this passive formation depends on dialectal variation. The corresponding verbal element in Dutch is *krijgen*. Also, while *kriegen* seems to have developed into another passive auxiliary, one that is used more colloquially than the canonical *werden* ('be') passive auxiliary (but see Haider 1984, 1986 for arguments against this), our analysis actually doesn't treat *kriegen* as a lexical item of the category "auxiliary" but as the spell-out of a sequence of certain functional heads. We will assume here that there is not a lexical category "auxiliary". *kriegen*'s status as less of an auxiliary than *werden* will be treated as a consequence of its similarity with the main verb *kriegen* and its more complex structure. This is laid out in detail in section 4.

⁷ The following are other examples of the regularity and productivity of *kriegen*-passivization (DAT-NOM alternation) besides our recurring example from the introduction: (2) *Jemand schenkte ihm einen Stift* ('Someone gave him.DAT a pen as a gift') → *Er kriegte einen Stift geschenkt* ('He.NOM got a pen as a gift'); (i) *Jemand zahlte ihm seinen Lohn aus* ('Someone gave him.DAT his pay') → *Er kriegte seinen Lohn ausgezahlt* ('He.NOM was given his pay'); (ii) *Jemand lieferte ihr etwas aus* ('Someone delivered something to her.DAT') → *Sie kriegte etwas ausgeliefert* ('She.NOM got something delivered'); *Jemand erteilte ihm eine Lektion* ('Someone gave him.DAT a lecture') → *Er kriegte eine Lektion erteilt* ('He.NOM was given a lecture'); *Jemand vermachte ihr eine wertvolle Uhr* ('Someone left a valuable watch to her.DAT') → *Sie kriegte eine wertvolle Uhr vermacht* ('She.NOM inherited a valuable watch').

marking, seems to violate Burzio’s generalization as the theme is assigned ACC case despite no external argument being present. Furthermore, the DAT case in the active version of the sentence seems more like structural than inherent or lexical case. This is because, if DAT case is indeed assigned inherently, alongside the Affectee theta-role (as shown in Figure 4), rather than structurally, we don’t expect the recipient argument to lack case and be in need of NOM.

Broekhuis and Cornips (2012) present data suggesting that DAT is structurally assigned, contra Woolford (2006) and also going against what we show in Figure 4. Cleverly, they call verbs like *kriegen* (‘get’), whose internal arguments are assigned NOM and ACC (instead of DAT and ACC), “undative”, in analogy with verbs like *fall*, whose internal argument is assigned NOM (instead of ACC) and which are known as unaccusative. Like the main verb *kriegen*, the auxiliary use seems to be “undative” in that DAT case is absorbed and ACC case surfaces. This is strong support for a transformational approach to the *kriegen*-passive formation, which we take to be correct as well. In order to account for the small class of verbs that allow *kriegen*-passives, Broekhuis and Cornips posit semantic restrictions on verb type and the thematic role of the I.O. The verb, for example, must denote the mode of transfer of possession because *geben* (‘give’) only denotes a transfer, not a mode, and, as shown in (9), is ungrammatical as a *kriegen*-passive.

- (9) * Er kriegte einen Stift gegeben.
he.NOM got a.ACC pen given
 ‘He got given a pen.’

According to their account, participles can’t assign case (see also Jaeggli 1986 and Baker et al. 1989), passive auxiliaries are responsible for case assignments, and *kriegen* licenses NOM on its highest argument, the recipient, and ACC on its lower argument, the theme. While we don’t agree with these tenets of Broekhuis and Cornips’ analysis, we agree that main verb and auxiliary uses of *kriegen* share semantic properties including the meaning ‘be given’, which offers another explanation of why *kriegen* is not used to passivize *geben* ‘give’ (see (9)). We return to the connection between the passive auxiliary and the main verb *kriegen* as part of the formalization of our proposal in section 4.

3.2.3 Arguments against *kriegen*-passives involving case alternation

A number of arguments have been brought up against a transformational approach to *kriegen* + past participle constructions and thus against the systematic DAT-NOM via *kriegen*-passivization. Haider (1986), for example, argues that dative idioms lose their idiomatic meaning when transformed into their *kriegen* + past participle equivalent and that this doesn’t happen when they are passivized with the canonical auxiliary *werden*. He provides the example given in (10), a rather uncommon idiom.

- (10) a. Er reißt der Welt ein Loch.
he.NOM rips the.DAT world a.ACC hole
 ‘He is very energetic.’ [idiomatic]
- b. Die Welt kriegt von ihm ein Loch gerissen.
the.NOM world gets by him a.ACC hole ripped
 ‘The world gets a hole ripped into it by him.’ [non-idiomatic]
 (Haider 1996: 21)

Haider contrasts this change in meaning with the *werden*-passivization of the idiom *Jemand (NOM) las ihm (DAT) die Leviten (ACC)* (‘Someone read him the Riot Act’), which is *Ihm (DAT) wurden die Leviten (NOM) gelesen* and still has idiomatic meaning. We don’t take this as evidence against a transformational account of *kriegen*-passives because many idioms don’t maintain their meaning when passivized (e.g. *The bucket was/got kicked by him* doesn’t mean ‘He died’), regardless of which auxiliary is used. In fact, just like the *kriegen*-passivization, we are pretty sure that the *werden*-passivization of (10a) can only be understood non-

idiomatically: *Der Welt wird von ihm ein Loch gerissen* ('A hole is being ripped into the world by him'). It seems that the case of the internal arguments is relevant for idiomatic interpretation, perhaps in addition to the arguments' position in the clause. In Haider's example *Jemand (NOM) las ihm (DAT) die Leviten (ACC)* ('Someone read him the Riot Act'), the dative argument is not contributing to the idiomatic meaning. Anyone could be read the Riot Act, meaning that this is a bare VP-idiom. Thus, the case assigned to the affectee does not seem relevant for this idiom, and passivization is allowed. In contrast, the idiom in (10a) includes the applicative (i.e. the affectee's) layer of structure and the associated case. As our analysis in the next section involves the absorption of DAT case in the *kriegen*-passive, it should come as no surprise that an idiom reliant on a dative argument will not be able to undergo *kriegen*-passivization.

McIntyre (2006: 188), in whose analysis the subject of a *kriegen* + past participle construction 'gets/has' a whole situation happen(ing) to them, also questions the transformational approach to recipient passives (see also Oya 2015). He points out that English *get* can be used to translate *kriegen*-constructions literally (see the translation of (11b)), although English lacks a structure parallel to the German active structure from which we claim the passive *kriegen*-structure is derived (see (11a), where the gloss isn't grammatical).⁸

- (11) a. Ein Polizist entzog mir den Pass.
a.NOM policeman confiscated me.DAT the.ACC passport
 'I had a policeman confiscate my passport.'
- b. Ich bekam den Pass (von einem Polizisten) entzogen.
I.NOM got a.ACC passport (by a policeman) confiscated
 'I got/had my passport confiscated (by a policeman).'
- (McIntyre 2006: 188)

So, there isn't an active structure parallel to the German one on which the *get*-structure can be based. We argue that this doesn't speak against a transformational analysis of *kriegen*- (or *get*-) passives because the dative affectee argument *mir*, when negatively affected, can often be translated with 'on me' (as in 'The police officer went crazy on me', see also Bosse 2015), and the reason there isn't a good literal translation of examples like this is that English doesn't have DAT case. Furthermore, the fact that there isn't an exact parallel between German *kriegen* and English *get* can also be attributed to *kriegen* needing an affectee argument as subject and *get* allowing for non-affectee subjects. The ungrammatical German sentence **Das Buch kriegte den Titel geändert* literally translates to the grammatical English sentence 'The book got its title changed'.⁹

Finally, Bosse et al. (2012) and Bosse (2015) maintain that not every affectee argument participates in DAT-NOM alternation. They make a crucial distinction between "affected experiencers" and beneficiary arguments, claiming that the latter do but the former don't allow a passive reading when construed as a

⁸ Note that, while the DAT-NOM-alternating argument is typically an animate recipient, it doesn't have to be. If it's inanimate, it can still be a recipient (e.g. *Der Wein bekam ein wenig Wasser beigemischt* 'The wine got a little water mixed in' (Leirbukt 1997: 161)). If it's not a recipient, but rather the opposite, namely a source, as in McIntyre's example here, it's certainly still an affected participant (see a similar example with the verb *entziehen* 'withdraw' in Bader and Häusler 2013: 135). We use "Affectee" as an umbrella term to capture all this.

⁹ German *den Titel* ('the title') translates to English *its title* because English does not allow for external possession to the same extent as German does (see Lee-Schoenfeld 2016).

kriegen-passive. *Chris* in (12a) is argued to be an “affected experiencer”, and *der Frau* in (13a), a beneficiary argument.

- (12) a. Alex zerbrach **Chris** Bens Vase. [affected experiencer]
Alex.NOM broke Chris.DAT Ben's.ACC vase
 ‘Alex broke Ben’s vase on Chris.’ (Bosse 2015: 29)
- b. Chris bekam/kriegte Bens Vase von Alex zerbrochen. [no passive reading]
Chris.NOM got Ben's.ACC vase by Alex broken
 ‘Chris got Ben’s vase broken by Alex for him.’ (Bosse 2015: 127)
- (13) a. Jan öffnete **der Frau** die Tür. [benefactive]
Jan.NOM opened the.DAT woman the.ACC door
 ‘Jan opened the door for the woman.’ (Bosse 2015: 124)
- b. Die Frau bekam/kriegte (von Jan) die Tür geöffnet. [passive reading]
the.NOM woman got (by Jan) the.ACC door opened
 ‘The woman got the door opened (by Jan).’ (Bosse 2015: 127)

While the many different names in (12) make it difficult to interpret *Chris* as a passivized affectee who is negatively impacted by Alex’s breaking Ben’s vase, the same construction with not only proper nouns but also common nouns and pronouns representing the participants in the situation is much more readily interpretable as a *kriegen*-passive. This is illustrated in (14).

- (14) a. Gleich zerbricht der Idiot **ihr** noch Omas Vase.
momentarily breaks the.NOM idiot her.DAT additionally Oma's.ACC vase
 ‘In a moment, the idiot is going to break Grandma’s vase, too (and that’ll be awful for her).’
- b. Gleich kriegt sie von dem Idioten noch Omas Vase zerbrochen.
momentarily gets she.NOM by the idiot additionally Oma's.ACC vase broken
 ‘In a moment, she’s going to get Grandma’s vase broken by that idiot, too.’

Thus, we still hold on to our assumption that DAT systematically alternates with NOM via *kriegen*-passivization.¹⁰

3.3 Interim summary

The solution we argue for in section 4 is based on an analysis of the *kriegen*-passive construction as a true passive (contra Haider 1984, 1986), but it maintains that DAT is inherent, not structural case (in line with Woolford 2006 and Haider 2010). It also upholds Burzio’s generalization. To reiterate the main point we’ve made in sections 2 and 3, the addition of a beneficiary argument in English and the passive auxiliary use of *kriegen* (‘get’) in German both require the introduction of an additional (in our terms, “non-canonical”) case feature. This case feature comes with the I.O.-introducing applicative head and spells out as ACC.

¹⁰ Bosse et al. (2012: 1203) bring up another example to make the point that a dative “affected experiencer” can’t alternate with NOM while allowing for a passive reading: *Sie lobt mir den Anzug* (‘She praises me.DAT the suit’) → *Ich kriege/bekomme den Anzug gelobt* (‘I get my suit praised’), but we can’t comment on this example because it isn’t part of the dialect spoken by the co-author who is a native speaker, and other native speaking consultants weren’t familiar with this expression either.

4. Spell-out of *werden* versus *kriegen*: A unified account of German passive constructions

4.1 *Passive werden*

The construction and spell-out of *werden*-passives proceed relatively uncontroversially and are shown in Figure 5. The theme is introduced as complement to V, and if an affected argument, e.g. a recipient, is included in the derivation, it's introduced by an applicative head. The recipient is assigned the Affectee theta-role and its associated inherent DAT case. A passive *v* completes the verbal domain but fails to case-license the theme. T assigns NOM at a distance via Agree. And the passive auxiliary *werden* 'be' is the spell-out of the passive voice head (v_{pass}) or of the passive voice head plus the applicative head ($v_{pass}+v_{appl}$).

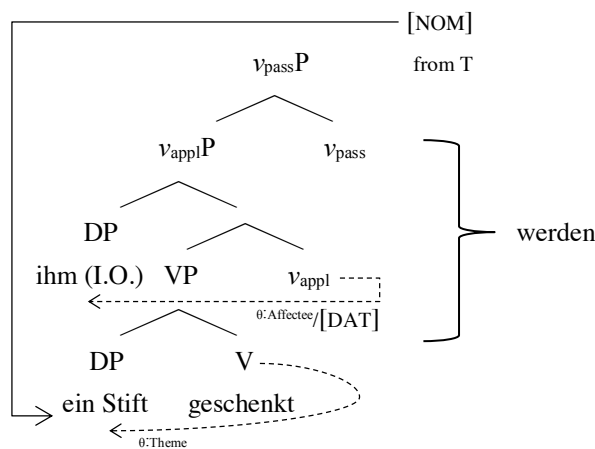


Figure 5: *werden*-passive: (*dass*) *ihm ein Stift geschenkt wurde* ('(that) a pen was given to him as a gift')¹¹

4.2 *Passive kriegen*

The *kriegen*-passive proceeds along a similar path as the *werden*-passive and is shown in Figure 6. The theme argument is introduced as complement to V, and if an affected argument, e.g. a recipient argument, is part of the derivation, it's introduced by an applicative head. However – and this is crucial – this applicative head has not bundled the Affectee theta-role with a DAT case feature. It lacks DAT-case-licensing ability. It's what we call a defective applicative head. Given Woolford's (2006) split of non-structural case into idiosyncratic lexical and predictable inherent case, we reject structural DAT case. Because inherent case occupies the middle ground between rigid structural case and unpredictable lexical case, there can be predictable exceptions to theta-related case assignment.

Our defective applicative head in German contains a non-canonical ACC case feature, just like the applicative head in English benefactive constructions (see section 2). Following Alexiadou et al.'s (2013) analysis of *get*-passives in English, we finish the construction of the verbal domain in German with a passive voice head. This voice head is why the *kriegen*-passive licenses agentive adverbs (e.g. *absichtlich* 'purposefully') and *von* ('by')-phrases. It also verbalizes the root and completes the sequences of heads

¹¹ Since our tree structures don't include the CP domain, main clause verb-second order can't be shown in them. This is why we follow standard practice and give example sentences in Figures 5, 6, and 7 that are SOV embedded clauses starting with the complementizer *dass* ('that').

associated with the verb’s selection requirements. The passive auxiliary use of *kriegen* thus is the spell-out of a passive voice head plus a defective (non-DAT-case-assigning) applicative head ($v_{\text{pass}}+v_{\text{appl-def}}$). The combination of an active voice head plus a defective applicative head ($v_{\text{act}}+v_{\text{appl-def}}$) is ruled out by selectional requirements such that $v_{\text{appl-def}}$ can only be merged with v_{pass} . This way, we avoid ungrammatical results like **Ich gebe ihm.ACC einen.ACC Stift* (‘I give him a pen’), with double-ACC-marking. Also note that the normal affectee-introducing applicative head that couples theta-assignment with inherent DAT-case assignment does not come with a non-canonical ACC case feature. If it did, we would derive ungrammatical *werden*-passives like **Ihm.DAT wird den.ACC Stift gegeben* (‘To him is the pen given’), with no NOM-marked DP.

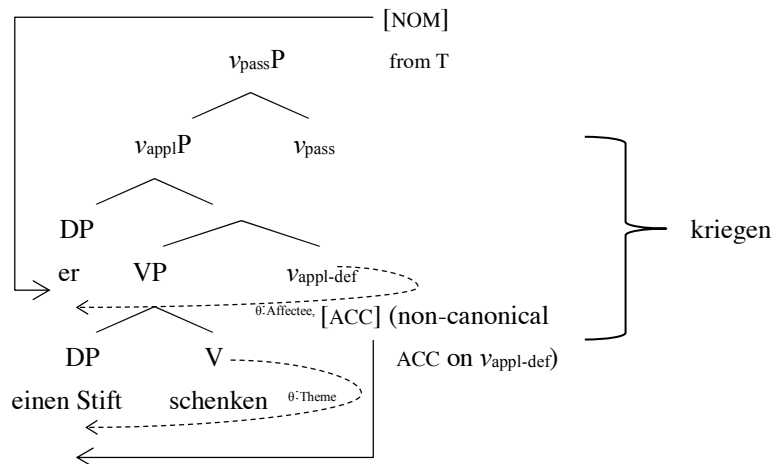


Figure 6: *kriegen*-passive: *(dass) er einen Stift geschenkt kriegte* ‘(that) he got a pen gifted’

Following Taraldsen (2015) and Ramchand (2008), we assume that, in both passivization constructions (with *werden* and *kriegen*), the main verb is spelled out as a past participle as it fails to lexicalize all heads associated with its lexical entry, i.e. the sequence of heads does not contain an active voice head or T. Rather than stipulating a syntactic head-movement process, we are, at least tentatively, proposing spell-outs that can be accounted for via a post-syntactic operation such as Spanning (see e.g. Bye and Svenonius 2012). Spans of heads form syntactic words post-syntactically if they form a contiguous sequence of heads (i.e. V, v , and T). For our purposes here, V and the defective applicative head must not form an eligible span and thus result in two words (*kriegen* and the main V).

This approach to *kriegen*-passives allows us to evaluate the claim by Haider (1984, 1986) that *kriegen* is (loosely speaking) “less of an auxiliary” than *werden*. Under the approach sketched here, (all) auxiliary verbs are the spell-out of functional heads. With a less enriched (pre-syntactic) lexicon, there is less of a need to distinguish between elements of the category “auxiliary”. Under the assumption that the lexicon that feeds the syntactic computation is comprised of just functional heads and lexical roots, *kriegen* is “less of an auxiliary” because of its resemblance to the lexical root and because the conditions underlying its spell-out (the combination of both v_{pass} and $v_{\text{appl-def}}$) are more restricted than those spelling out the passive *werden* (just v_{pass}). Furthermore, the structural description presented here allows us to understand similarities between the auxiliary and the main verb *kriegen*.

4.3 Main verb *kriegen*

Returning to the connection between the auxiliary use of *kriegen* and the main verb *kriegen* (also meaning ‘get’) noted by Broekhuis and Cornips (2012), an example of the latter is given in (15).

- (15) Er kriegte einen Stift.
he.NOM got a.ACC pen
 ‘He got a pen.’

Both auxiliary and main verb versions involve a NOM-marked recipient. So, both would need to involve a defective applicative head that assigns the Affectee theta-role but not DAT case. Since main verb *kriegen* has no agent argument and no passive morphology is present in the construction, there should be no voice head at all, neither an active nor a passive one. Thus, just like its auxiliary counterpart, main verb *kriegen* would also need to have a non-canonical ACC case feature coming with the defective applicative head so that ACC is available for the theme argument. Unlike the auxiliary version, however, the main verb is not the spell-out of just functional heads, of course. It must have a lexical root. A tree-structural representation of example (15) is given in Figure 7.

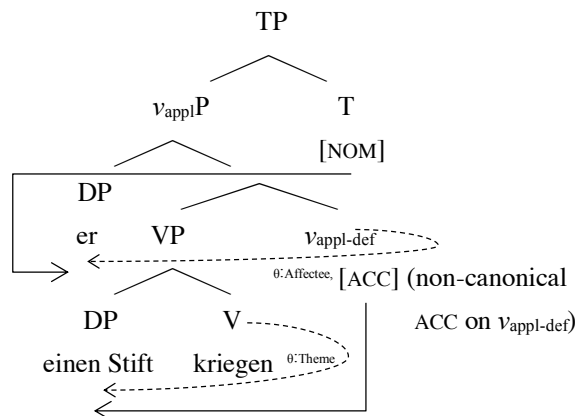


Figure 7: Main verb *kriegen*: (*dass*) *er einen Stift kriegte* ‘(that) he got a pen’

The fact that agentive adverbs like *absichtlich* (‘purposefully’) are not acceptable with main verb *kriegen* (#*Er kriegte absichtlich einen Stift* ‘He purposefully got a pen’), supports the proposed absence of a voice head in Figure 7. Note that the compatibility of *von* (‘by’)-phrases with main verb *kriegen* (*Er kriegte einen Stift von seinem Vater* ‘He got a pen from his dad’) stems from the fact that *von* in this context actually doesn’t mean ‘by’ but ‘from’ and thus expresses source rather than agency.

5. A brief look at an alternative approach to our non-canonical ACC: Dependent case

Dependent case (ACC), according to which a DP c-commanded by a caseless DP gets ACC-marked (Baker and Vinokurova 2010), has the potential to capture a similar range of facts and has been successful in capturing other non-canonical instantiations of ACC case in German, such as passives of reflexive verbs, discussed by Schäfer (2012).

- (16) a. Hier haben die Römer sich gewaschen.
here have the.NOM Romans REFL.ACC washed
 b. Hier wurde sich (von den Römern) gewaschen.
here became REFL.ACC (by the Romans) washed
 ‘Here, the Romans washed.’
 (Schäfer 2012: 215)

The ACC on the anaphor *sich* in the passivization of inherently or naturally reflexive verbs like *sich waschen* (‘wash’) in (16), indeed seems to be best analyzed as an instance of dependent case. Since v_{pass} lacks ACC-case-licensing ability, (16b) is another example of an apparent violation of Burzio’s generalization. Schäfer argues that, in the absence of a DP that can value the phi-features on T (there is no NOM-marked argument in impersonal passives, and the agent *von* (‘by’)-phrase is optional), default agreement, i.e. 3rd person singular valuation of the phi-features on T, kicks in. Crucially, the reflexive is realized with dependent case (ACC) because something else, in this instance, not a different DP but default agreement, has already valued T.

With respect to the case patterns observed in German *kriegen*-passives, when the goal/affectee argument agrees with T and values its phi-features, the theme argument would be realized with dependent case (ACC). This same pattern would hold for the main verb *kriegen* as well. Under this potential account, there is no direct connection between the apparent absorption of DAT case and the availability of ACC case in the passive. We would still need to assume that there is a featural distinction between the applicative head used in active dative constructions and the defective/‘undative’ applicative head used in *kriegen*-constructions, which would control the occurrence of DAT case. In so far as the defective/‘undative’ applicative head is needed, we will assume it is also the locus of ACC case licensing in *kriegen*-passives.

Thus, while dependent case analyses have become influential in generative approaches to case, this paper will largely maintain a theory of case based on Agree (see e.g. Chomsky 2000, 2001), wherein a functional head enters into an Agree relationship with a DP bearing an unvalued (and uninterpretable) case feature. The Agree relationship provides the case attribute a value, rendering it interpretable (see e.g. Svenonius and Adger 2011), licensing the occurrence of the DP at the interfaces by providing morphological interpretation. In contrast to the constructions Schäfer (2008, 2012) focuses on, passives of reflexive verbs, reflexive anticausatives, and reflexive middles (see also Pitteroff 2015), the constructions we discuss in this paper, English benefactives and the German *kriegen*-passive, involve not the invariant reflexive pronoun *sich* but full-fledged theme arguments. In addition, the use of the non-canonical passive auxiliary *kriegen* (‘get’) instead of the canonical one, *werden* (‘be’), as well as the connection between non-canonical ACC case and the seeming absorption of inherent DAT case serve as the basis for our proposal. Although we acknowledge the relevance of a dependent case approach, a detailed comparison with Schäfer’s analysis, while certainly valuable, must be left for future research.

6. Conclusion

We have explored the use of non-canonical ACC case as a means of explaining case licensing in German and English DOCs. Themes in English benefactive constructions and in German *kriegen/bekommen*-passives don’t receive the structural ACC case associated with active voice (or an agentive *v*). In English, this is prompted by the locality of the beneficiary, as it intervenes between the voice head and the theme. In German, it is due to no active voice head being present to license structural ACC. We have proposed that, in both constructions, the applicative-introducing head comes with an extra ACC case feature that it assigns down to the theme as soon as it’s merged.

We have also shown that German passive auxiliary lexicalization stems from the series of projected verbal heads in the respective passive constructions. This formalizes Broekhuis and Cornips’ (2012)

empirical generalizations as well as Haider's (2010) intuition regarding pooled argument grids, while explaining case-licensing and theta-assignment in line with the Minimalist Program. The passive auxiliary *werden* ('be') is the spell-out of the passive voice head and any other verbal heads besides the main verb, like an applicative head. The other passive auxiliary, *kriegen/bekommen* ('get'), is the spell-out of the passive voice head and the defective recipient-introducing applicative head, which, while able to assign its Affectee theta-role, does not assign the inherent DAT case that normally comes with the Affectee-role. We have also suggested this defective applicative head analysis for the main verb version of *kriegen* and shown that the main verb should have no voice head associated with it at all.

We have thus offered a unified analysis not only of English and German DOCs but also of the two (so-called "Vorgangs-")passive constructions in German.

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