A Different View on Ergativity in German Nominalizations*

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Introduction

- It is a well-known fact that strictly nominative-accusative languages exhibit ergative patterns in their nominalizations, cf. Comrie (1978) and Dixon (1994).

- Ergativity in nominalizations is pervasive in German; in fact, nominalized infinitives with post-nominal subject and object look like mirror images of clausal constructions. These constructions exhibit both morphological ergativity (section 1) and syntactic ergativity (appendix A5). This talk addresses the former.

Section 1: The Phenomenon

- In the following examples, $A$ refers to the transitive subject, $S$ to the intransitive subject and $O$ to the transitive object (adopted only for expository purposes from Dixon 1994). The focus is on the nominalized examples; their clausal counterparts are provided with shaded background for the purpose of comparison.

observation 1: The word order is inverted (SOV in CPs, VOS in DPs) and the morphological alignment is inverted ($S/A$ vs $O$ in clauses, $O/S$ vs $A$ in nominalizations). I will gloss the argument marking prepositions durch (lit. ‘through’) and von (lit. ‘from’) as DURCH and VON, respectively.

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(1) nominalization with post-nominal subject and object

a. [das Zerstören [vom Staat] [durch den Kaiser]] \( V \ O_{VON} \ A_{DURCH} \)
   \( \text{the destroy.INF VON.the state DURCH the emperor} \)
   ‘the emperor’s destroying the state’

b. [das Fallen [vom Kaiser]] \( V \ S_{VON} \)
   \( \text{the fall.INF VON.the emperor} \)
   ‘the emperor’s falling’

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<th>Table 1</th>
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<th>ergative-absolutive system</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>transitive</td>
<td>( A = \text{nominative} / O = \text{accusative} )</td>
<td>( O = \text{absolutive} / A = \text{ergative} )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>intransitive</td>
<td>( S = \text{nominative} )</td>
<td>( S = \text{absolutive} )</td>
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(2) basic clausal configuration

a. ... dass [der Kaiser] [den Staat] zerstört. \( A_{NOM} O_{ACC} V \)
   \( \text{that the.NOM emperor the.ACC state destroys} \)
   ‘... that the emperor destroys the state.’

b. ... dass [der Kaiser] fällt. \( S_{NOM} V \)
   \( \text{that the.NOM emperor falls} \)
   ‘... that the emperor falls.’

observation 2: “subject demoting” alternations (passive and anticausative) change the morphological alignment in clauses (the “promoted” objects change from accusative to nominative), but not in the nominalizations. (Bold type used for expository reasons to mark elements under discussion.)

(3) passive alternation in nominal constructions

a. [das Schlagen [vom Bären][durch’n Peter]] \( V \ O_{VON} A_{DURCH} \)
   \( \text{the hit.INF VON.the bear DURCH.the Peter} \)
   ‘Peter’s hitting of the bear’

b. [das Geschlagen Werden [vom Bären][durch’n Peter]] \( V \ O_{VON} A_{DURCH} \)
   \( \text{the hit be.INF VON.the bear DURCH.the Peter} \)
   ‘the bear’s being hit by Peter’
(4) anticausative alternation in nominal constructions

a. [das Zerbrechen [vom Stock] [durch den Peter]]  
vOvON  aDURCH

the break.INF VON.the stick DURCH the Peter
‘Peter’s breaking of the stick’

b. [das Zerbrechen [vom Stock]]  
vOvON

the break.INF VON.the stick
‘the breaking of the stick’

Table 2

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<td>O = absolutive / A = ergative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>subj. demotion</td>
<td>O = nominative / A = oblique</td>
<td>O = absolutive / A = oblique</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(5) passive alternation in clausal constructions

a. ... dass [der Peter] [den Bären] schlägt. ANOM OACC V

that the.NOM Peter the.ACC bear hits
‘... that Peter is hitting the bear.’

b. ... dass [der Bär] [vom Peter] geschlagen wird. ONOM Aobl V

that the.NOM bear by.the Peter hits.PP is
‘... that the bear is being hit by Peter.’

(6) anticausative alternation in clausal constructions

a. ... dass [der Peter] [den Stock] zerbricht. ANOM OACC V

that the.NOM Peter the.ACC stick breaks
‘... that Peter breaks the stick.’

b. ... dass [der Stock] zerbricht. ONOM V

that the.NOM stick breaks
‘... that the stick breaks.’

observation 3: “object demoting” alternations (e.g. the conative alternation and the unspecified object alternation) can change the alignment in the nominalizations (the subjects change from DURCH to VON), but not in clauses.
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(7) conative/antipassive alternation in nominal constructions

a. [das Schlagen [vom Bären] [durch den Peter]] V O_{VON} A_{DURCH}
   the hit.INF VON.the bear DURCH the Peter
   ‘Peter’s hitting of the bear’

b. [das Ein-schlagen [vom Peter] [auf den Bären]] V A_{VON} [O_{OBL}]
   the AFF-beat.INF VON.the Peter at the bear
   ‘Peter’s hitting at the bear’

(8) unspecified object alternation in nominal constructions

a. [das Putzen [von der Wohnung] [durch den Peter]] V O_{VON} A_{DURCH}
   the clean.INF VON the apartment DURCH the Peter
   ‘Peter’s cleaning of the apartment’

b. [das Putzen [vom Peter]] V A_{VON}
   the clean.INF VON the Peter
   ‘Peter’s cleaning’ (i.e. ‘the cleaning by Peter’)

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<tr>
<td>transitive</td>
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<td>O = absolutive / A = ergative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>obj. demotion</td>
<td>A = nominative / O = oblique</td>
<td>A = absolutive / O = oblique</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(9) conative/antipassive alternation in clausal constructions

a. ... dass [der Peter] [den Bären] schlägt. A_{NOM} O_{ACC} V
   that the.NOM Peter the.ACC bear hits
   ‘... that Peter is hitting the bear.’

b. ... dass [der Peter] [auf den Bären] ein-schlägt. A_{NOM} [O_{OBL}] V
   that the.NOM Peter at the bear AFF-hits
   ‘... that Peter hits at the bear.’

(10) unspecified object alternation in clausal constructions

a. ... dass [der Peter] [die Wohnung] putzt. A_{NOM} O_{ACC} V
   that the.NOM Peter the.ACC apartment cleans
   ‘... that Peter cleans the apartment.’

b. ... dass [der Peter] putzt. A_{NOM} V
   that the.NOM Peter cleans
   ‘... that Peter cleans.’
Conclusion: The patterns in German nominalizations with postnominal arguments look exactly like the patterns found in ergative-absolutive languages. The basic morphological alignment is O/S vs A; subject demoting alternations do not trigger a change in morphological alignment, whereas object demoting alternations do.

Plan of action: Investigating German nominalizations with post-nominal arguments might eventually shed some new light on the nature of morphological ergativity

Section 2: A Different View of German Nominalizations

What we have seen in section 1:
⇒ In German CPs the word order is SOV and morphological alignment NOM-ACC
⇒ In German DPs we find the order VOS with morphological alignment ERG-ABS

The theory in a nutshell:
⇒ Ergative structures in German involve predicate fronting (XP fronting).
⇒ German thus shares properties with ergative languages such as Niuean (Massam 2000) and Chol Mayan (Coon 2007).

The analysis is based on the contrast between the “ergative-absolutive” pattern with postnominal subject and object, repeated in (11a), with a pattern where the object precedes the nominalized verb, bearing accusative, in (11b).

(11) a. *VON-Inf* type nominalizations

[Das Zerstören [vom Staat] [durch den Kaiser]] beunruhigt mich.

‘The emperor’s destroying of the state worries me.’

b. *ACC-Inf* type nominalizations


‘The emperor destroying the state worries me.’
Despite their superficial similarity to English *ing-of* and *Acc-ing* gerunds, I propose to analyze these two as the same construction; I assume that (11a) and (11b) are derivationally related to each other. Arguments against treating *VON-Inf* type nominalizations as nominalizations of the V head are given in appendix A1.

### 2.1 The Phrase Structure

Sketch of the derivations for both *Acc-Inf* and *VON-Inf* nominalizations:

(12) configuration before movement

\[\text{xVP} = \text{extended VP} \]
\[\text{XP} = \text{nominalized xVP} \]
\[\text{“NMLZ”} = \text{nominalizer} \]
\[\_ = \text{unpronounced} \]

**ACC-Inf derivation**

**VON-Inf derivation**
claim 1:  *VON-Inf* type nominalizations and *ACC-Inf* type nominalizations are derived from the same underlying structure by movement of the direct object (in *VON-Inf*) and lack thereof (in *ACC-Inf*). Evidence is provided in section 2.1.1.

claim 2:  All German nominalized infinitives involve obligatory fronting of a nominalized extended projection of the VP (henceforth *XP*). Evidence is provided in section 2.1.2.

claim 3:  If the direct object moves out of the XP prior to XP fronting, its case pattern changes – in the absence of movement the direct object is assigned accusative; in the movement case, it is marked by *VON*. A sketch of the case assignment mechanism is provided in section 2.2.

side remark:  Moved direct objects seem to land above the subject’s position. (Evidence given in appendix A2.)

2.1.1.  Evidence for movement of the object out of the XP (claim 1 above)

evidence 1:  The direct object restriction (*DOR*) on resultatives is still satisfied when the direct object is marked by *VON*. (Assuming the DOR requires a local relationship between the resultative and its complement’s base position.)

(13) a.  Das ständige [[[die *Vase* in *kleine Stücke*] zu *Zerbrechen*] der *Vase*] [durch den Otto].  

the constant the *ACC* vase into small pieces to break *INF* try *INF* DURCH the Otto  

‘Otto’s constant trying to break the vase into small pieces’

b.  Das ständige [[[t₇ in *kleine Stücke*] zu *Zerbrechen*] *Versuchen*] [von der *Vase*₇] [durch den Otto].  

the constant into small pieces to break *INF* try *INF* *VON* *ACC* try *INF* DURCH the Otto  

‘Otto’s trying to break the vase into small pieces’
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evidence 2: Condition C violations within the VP (e.g. c-command of the base position of the direct object by a coreferent indirect object if the former is a non-pronominal DP) are preserved. (Illustrated for a passive construction.)

(14) a. das ständige [[dem Sohn [der Kaiserin\!]\, t₃ Gezeigt Werden] the constant the.DAT son the.GEN empress shown be.INF [von der entführten Kaiserin\!]₃ VON the kidnapped empress ‘the constant being shown to the son of the empress of the kidnapped empress’

\[\checkmark\]

\[
\text{DP}
\]

\[
\text{D}
\]

\[
\text{XP}_{\text{[+nominal]}}
\]

\[
\ldots
\]

\[
\text{DO}_7
\]

\[
\text{(SUBJ)}
\]

\[
t_{\text{XP}}
\]

\[
\text{IO}
\]

\[
\text{V}
\]

\[
\text{DP}_7
\]

\[
\text{DO}_7
\]

\[
\text{(no c-command, Condition C satisfied)}
\]

b.* das ständige [[[der entführten Kaiserin\!]\, t₃ Gezeigt Werden] the constant the.DAT kidnapped empress shown be.INF [vom Sohn [der Kaiserin\!]₃ VON the son the.GEN empress ‘the constant being shown to the kidnapped empress of the empress’s son’

\[\times\]

\[
\text{DP}
\]

\[
\text{D}
\]

\[
\text{XP}_{\text{[+nominal]}}
\]

\[
\ldots
\]

\[
\text{DO}
\]

\[
\text{(SUBJ)}
\]

\[
t_{\text{XP}}
\]

\[
\text{IO}_7
\]

\[
\text{V}
\]

\[
\text{DP}_7
\]

\[
\text{(c-command, Condition C violation)}
\]
Note that the alternative of assuming a strictly right branching structure as given in (15) is ruled out by c-command facts such as those in (16).

(15) \[ \begin{array}{c}
\text{DP} \\
\downarrow \\
\text{D} \\
\downarrow \\
\text{IO} \\
\downarrow \\
\langle \text{DO}_{\text{ACC}} \rangle \\
\downarrow \\
\text{V} \\
\downarrow \\
\langle \text{DO}_{\text{DUR}} \rangle \\
\downarrow \\
\text{SUBJ} \\
\end{array} \]

(16) a. ?das ständige [[sie\textsubscript{7}] Kritisieren] [durch den Sohn [der Lehrerin\textsubscript{7}]]
the constant her.\textsubscript{ACC} criticize.\textsubscript{INF} DURCH the son the.\textsubscript{GEN} teacher
‘the constant criticizing her by the teacher’s son’

b. *?das ständige [[den Sohn [der Lehrerin\textsubscript{7}]] Kritisieren] [durch sie\textsubscript{7} / the constant the son.\textsubscript{ACC} the.\textsubscript{GEN} teacher criticize.\textsubscript{INF} DURCH her sie\textsubscript{7} selber]
her herself
‘the constant criticizing the teacher’s son by her / her herself.’

2.1.2. Evidence for fronting of the XP (claim 2 above)

- Fronting of larger constituents induces freezing effects, i.e. covert movement from the fronted XP and reconstruction into the fronted XP are impossible (cf. Müller 1998, Bobaljik & Wurmbrand 2005).

evidence 1: No QR out of the XP.

⇒ If the direct object has moved out of the XP prior to XP fronting, it can scopally interact with the external argument (17a).

⇒ If the direct object has remained in the XP, it undergoes scope freezing and takes obligatory low scope with respect to the external argument (17b).
(17) a. das ständige Verfolgen von jedem Verbrecher durch (mindestens) einen Polizisten hat den Hauptmann befriedigt

‘the constant chasing of every criminal by (at least) one policeman used to satisfy the captain’ (∃ >> ∀ / ∀ >> ∃)

b. das ständige jeden Verbrecher Verfolgen durch (mindestens) einen Polizisten hat den Hauptmann befriedigt

‘the constant chasing every criminal by (at least) one policeman used to satisfy the captain’ (∃ >> ∀ / ∀ >> ∃)

evidence 2: No reconstruction into the XP. [See also (35)-(38) in appendix A3.]

⇒ Elements that have moved to the von-PP position cannot reconstruct into the XP.

A universal quantifier in the von-PP obligatorily takes scope over vergessen ‘forget’ located in the XP (18a).

⇒ In contrast, the accusative direct object within the XP may take both narrow scope and wide scope with respect to forget (18b) (the wide scope reading plausibly involving covert movement within the XP).

(18) a. das ständige zu schließen vergessen von allen Fenstern durch den Nachtwächter hat ihn den Job gekostet

‘the constant forgetting to close of all windows by the night watchman has cost him his job’

(∀ >> forget / *forget >> ∀)

b. das ständige alle Fenster zu schließen vergessen durch den Nachtwächter hat ihn den Job gekostet

‘the constant forgetting to close all windows by the night watchman has cost him his job’

(OK forget >> ∀)
2.1.3. Interim Conclusion

- We can analyze German nominalizations as involving the (remnant) fronting of a larger constituent XP that contains the base position of the direct object.

\[(19)\]

\[
\text{DP} \\
\text{D} \\
\text{XP}^{[\text{+nominal}} \\
\text{“NOMINALIZER”} \quad \text{xVP}^{[\text{+verbal}} \\
\langle \text{OBJ} \rangle_{\text{ACC-position}} \quad \text{V-INF} \\
\]  

- Predicate fronting of this sort seems to coincide with ergativity in a number of languages (cf. Massam 2000, Coon 2007, amongst others; see also Coon & Salanova 2008). The following section sketches a possible analysis for German.

2.2. Deriving morphological alignment in German nominalized infinitives

2.2.1. The core mechanism


\[(20)\] dependent case revisited

Dependent case is assigned by a case assigner α to a uniquely merged DP in the domain of α when another DP in the domain of α is distinct from the DP being assigned dependent case.

- Dependent case assigned up to subject: ergative (DURCH in German)
- Dependent case assigned down to object: accusative (ACC in German)

DP_i is uniquely merged in the domain of a head x iff all occurrences of DP_i either c-command x or x c-commands all occurrences of DP_i
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► motivation for a non-inherent treatment of DURCH:

A treatment of DURCH as non-inherent is motivated by various alternations. [See also (39)-(41) in appendix A4.] Most crucially, whilst inherent case is preserved under raising (and A-movement in general, cf. Polinsky 2007), DURCH isn’t.

(21) German raising in nominalized infinitives

a. [das [den Otto] Verprügeln [durch den Peter]]
   the the.ACC Otto beat.INF DURCH the Peter
   ‘the beating Otto by Peter’

b. [das [den Otto] zu verprügeln Scheinen [vom/*durch den Peter]]
   the the.ACC Otto to beat seem.INF VON.the/DURCH the Peter
   ‘the seeming to beat Otto of/*by Peter’

► Note the difference to restructuring configurations where DURCH can be preserved.

(22) German restructuring in nominalized infinitives

a. [das [den Otto] Verprügeln [durch den Peter]]
   the the.ACC Otto beat.INF DURCH the Peter
   ‘the beating Otto by Peter’

b. [das [den Otto] zu verprügeln Versuchen [durch den Peter]]
   the the.ACC Otto to beat try.INF DURCH the Peter
   ‘the trying to beat Otto by Peter’

► motivation for the “unique merge” condition (Katzir 2007):

Katzir’s addition of a condition on being uniquely merged is needed for the ban on raising-to-ergative in passivized ditransitives, cf. (24), derived from (23):

(23) [das ständige [der Kaiserin den Boten Schicken] [durch den the constant the.DAT empress the.ACC courier send.INF DURCH the Kaiser]]
   emperor
   ‘the constant sending the courier to the empress by the emperor’
(24) a. [das ständige [der Kaiserin Geschickt Werden] [vom Boten]]
    the constant the.DAT empress sent be.INF VON.the courier
    ‘the constant being sent to the empress of the courier’

b.* [das ständige [der Kaiserin Geschickt Werden] [durch den Boten]]
    the constant the.DAT empress sent be.INF DURCH the courier
    ‘the constant being sent to the empress by the courier’

▶ motivation for the “second DP” condition:
Marantz’s requirement for a distinct DP in the domain of $\alpha$ is motivated by the
observation that unergatives typically select the unmarked case.

(25) das Tanzen [vom / ??durch den Kaiser]
    the dance.INF VON.the DURCH the emperor
    ‘the emperor’s dancing.’

2.2.2. Deriving the case patterns in German nominalized infinitives

▶ Assume that the syntactic configuration relevant for case assignment is the one found
after reconstruction of the XP. Assume further that the case assigner $\alpha$ is merged
above XP. We find two transitive configurations.

(26) a. $\text{ACC-Inf}$

[Diagram of ACC-Inf configuration]
b. *VON*-Inf

Adding the intransitive cases, our mechanism derives the four basic configurations:

(27) a. *transitive* *VON*-Inf

\[
[t_7 ~ \text{V-INF}_3 ~ \text{[VON OBJ]}_7 ~ \text{DURCH SUBJ}] \alpha \ t_3
\]

das Zerstören [vom Staat] [durch den Kaiser]

the destroy.INF VON.the state DURCH the emperor

‘The emperor’s destroying of the state worries me.’

b. *transitive* *ACC*-Inf

\[
[\text{OBJ-ACC}] ~ \text{V-INF}_3 ~ \text{[DURCH SUBJ]} \alpha \ t_3
\]

das [den Staat] Zerstören [durch den Kaiser]

the the.ACC state destroy.INF DURCH the emperor

‘The emperor destroying the state worries me.’

c. *unergative*

\[
[\text{~V-INF}_3 ~ \text{[VON SUBJ]}] \alpha \ t_3
\]

das Tanzen [vom Kaiser]

the dance.INF VON.the emperor

‘The emperor’s dancing worries me.’

d. *unaccusative*

\[
[t_7 ~ \text{V-INF}_3 ~ \text{[VON SUBJ]}_7 \alpha \ t_3
\]

das Fallen [vom Kaiser]

the fall.INF VON.the emperor

‘The emperor’s falling worries me.’
Conclusion

▶ Summary: German nominalizations can be analyzed as involving fronting of an extended projection of the verb, which seems to be linked to the ergative properties that we find. Whilst the present proposal is limited to German and the nature of the cross-linguistic link between predicate fronting and ergativity has not been addressed in this presentation (cf. Coon & Salanova 2008 for a recent proposal), it opens the possibility of viewing ergativity in German nominalizations in the light of the predicate fronting constructions found in ergative languages such as Niuean (Massam 2000) and Chol Mayan (Coon 2007).

▶ Open questions:

⇒ What is the nature of the abstract projections XP, xVP, & alpha, and of the projection to which the XP fronts?
⇒ What triggers XP fronting?
⇒ What is the link between VON and DURCH and the oblique Agent preposition von ‘from’ (in passives) or the oblique Causer preposition durch ‘through’ (in anticausatives), cf. Alexiadou, Anagnostopoulou & Schäfer (2007).
⇒ How do we treat ACC-Inf cases where the subject is marked by VON rather than by DURCH, such as (28b) which is as acceptable as (28a)?

(28) a. ACC-Inf type nominalizations with DURCH subject

‘The emperor destroying the state worries me.’

b. ACC-Inf type nominalizations with VON subject

[Das [den Staat] Zerstören [vom Kaiser]] beunruhigt mich.
‘The emperor’s destroying the state worries me.’
Appendix

A1. Evidence against a nominalization of $V^0$ analysis of $\text{VON-Inf}$ (amendment to section 2)

- One competing analysis with the one I provide for $\text{VON-Inf}$ assumes nominalization of the V head, cf. (29).

(29) $ \begin{array}{c} N^0 \\ \text{"NOMINALIZER"} \\ V^0 \end{array}$

- The following data suggest that a larger constituent is nominalized (rather than $V^0$)

$\Rightarrow$ they allow for adverbial modification and can contain instrumental and directional PPs in “pre-verbal” position:

(30) a. das [sorgfältig mit dem Hammer Zertrümmern] [vom Tisch] the carefully with the hammer shatter-INF VON.the table [durch den Lehrer] DURCH the teacher ‘the teacher’s shattering of the table carefully with the hammer’

b. das [vorsichtig durch das Öhr Fädeln] [vom Faden] [durch den Otto] [vom Traktor] the carefully through the eye thread.INF VON.the thread DURCH the Otto ‘Otto’s carefully threading the thread through the eye (of the needle)’

$\Rightarrow$ they may contain past tense auxiliaries and infinitival complements:

(31) das [wieder zu reparieren] vergessen Haben] [vom Traktor] the again to repair forgot have.INF VON.the tractor [durch den Otto] DURCH the Otto ‘Otto’s having forgotten to repair the tractor again’
A2. Evidence that the object moves above the subject

evidence 1: Presence versus absence of a Condition C violation in derived position

(32) a. Das ständige Kritisieren [von [Annas] Sohn] [durch sie]
    the constant criticize.INF VON Anna’s son DURCH her
    ‘The constant criticizing of Anna’s son by her’

    b.* Das ständige Kritisieren [von ihr] [durch [Annas] Sohn]
    the constant criticize.INF VON her DURCH Anna’s son
    ‘The constant criticizing of her by Anna’s son’

evidence 2: Presence versus absence of a bound variable reading in derived position

(33) a. Das ständige Prügeln [von jedem Schüler] [durch seinen Lieblingslehrer]
    the constant beat.INF VON each pupil DURCH his favorite teacher
    ‘The constant beating of each pupil by his favorite teacher ... [upset me in this movie].’

    b.* Das ständige Prügeln [von seinem Lieblingsschüler] [durch jeden Lehrer]
    the constant beat.INF VON his favorite pupil DURCH each teacher
    ‘The constant beating of his favorite pupil by each teacher ... [upset me in this movie].’

evidence 3: NPI licensing in the derived configuration (illustrated for the idiomatic

NPI eine Menschenseele ‘a soul’)

(34) a. das Belästigen [von keinem Wanderer] [durch eine Menschenseele]
    the molest.INF VON no(NEG) hiker DURCH a soul(NPI)
    ‘the molesting of no hiker by a soul ... [is a major feature of this area]’

    b.* das Belästigen [von einer Menschenseele] [durch keinen Wanderer]
    the molest.INF VON a soul(NPI) DURCH no(NEG) hiker
    ‘the molesting of a soul by no hiker ... [is required by law]’
A3. More evidence for XP fronting (amendment to section 2.1.2)

- The following data further illustrate the ban on reconstruction of the \textit{von-PP} into the XP, thus supporting an XP fronting approach.

⇒ No reconstruction of raised subjects into the XP.

(35) a. das ständige zu gewinnen scheinen [von einem (gewissen) Außenseiter]
the constant to win seem.\textsc{inf} \textsc{von} a certain outsider
macht den Otto nervös
makes the Otto nervous
‘the constant seeming to win of a (certain) outsider makes Otto nervous’
   i. * it makes Otto nervous that it constantly seems to be the case that an outsider wins. (*\textit{seem} >> \textsc{∃})
   ii. it makes Otto nervous that there is a (specific) outsider and he constantly seems to win. (\textsc{∃} >> \textit{seem})

b. das nicht gewinnen dürfen [von einem (gewissen) Außenseiter]
the not win may.\textsc{inf} \textsc{von} a certain outsider
verstößt gegen das Gesetz
violates against the law
‘the not being allowed to win of a (certain) outsider violates the law’
   i. * it violates the law that it is not permitted for any outsider to win. (*\textit{may} >> \textsc{∃})
   ii. it violates the law that there is a (specific) outsider and he is not permitted to win. (\textsc{∃} >> \textit{may})

⇒ No reconstruction of idiom chunks into the XP.

(36) a. Das erneute [die Katze im Sack Kaufen] [vom Otto]
the anew the.\textsc{acc} cat in.the bag buy.\textsc{inf} \textsc{von} the Otto
‘Otto’s buying a pig in a poke again’ (✓ idiomatic reading)

b. Das erneute [im Sack Kaufen] [von der Katze] [durch den Otto]
the anew in.the bag buy.\textsc{inf} \textsc{von} the cat \textsc{durch} the Otto
‘Otto’s buying the cat in the bag again’ (* idiomatic reading)

(37) a. Das erneute [Perlen vor die Säue Werfen] [vom Otto]
the anew pearls.\textsc{acc} before the swine throw.\textsc{inf} \textsc{von} the Otto
‘Otto’s casting pearls before swine again’ (✓ idiomatic reading)
b. Das erneute [vor die Säue Werfen] [von Perlen] [durch den Otto] the anew before the swine throw.INF VON pearls DURCH the Otto ‘Otto’s throwing pearls before the swine again’ (* idiomatic reading)

(38) a. Das erneute [ein Auge Zudrücken] [vom Otto] the anew a.ACC eye close.INF VON the Otto ‘Otto’s turning a blind eye again’ (✓ idiomatic reading)
  
b. Das erneute [Zudrücken] [von einem Auge] [durch den Otto] the anew close.INF VON a eye DURCH the Otto ‘Otto’s closing of one eye again’ (* idiomatic reading)

A4. Various VON/DURCH alternations in support of a non-inherent analysis

(39) a. das Schneiden [vom Brot] [mit dem Messer] [durch den Otto] the cut.INF VON the bread with the knife DURCH the Otto ‘Otto’s cutting of the bread with the knife’ (DURCH ⇔ Agent)
  
b. das Schneiden [vom Brot] [durch das Messer] the cut.INF VON the bread DURCH the knife ‘the dull knife’s slow cutting of the bread.’ (DURCH ⇔ Instrument)

(40) a. das Trocknen [vom Kleid] [in der Sonne] [durch den Otto] the dry.INF VON the dress in the sun DURCH the Otto ‘Otto’s drying of the dress in the sun’ (DURCH ⇔ Agent)
  
b. das Trocknen [vom Kleid] [durch die Sonne] the dry.INF VON the dress DURCH the sun ‘the sun’s drying of the dress’ (DURCH ⇔ Natural Cause)

(41) a. das Beweisen [von seiner Unschuld] [mit dem Brief] [durch den Otto] the prove.INF VON his innocence with the letter DURCH the Otto ‘Otto’s proving of his innocence with the letter’ (DURCH ⇔ Agent)
  
b. das Beweisen [von seiner Schuld] [durch den Brief] the prove.INF VON his guilt DURCH the letter ‘the letter’s proving of his innocence’ (DURCH ⇔ Theme?)
A5. Syntactic ergativity in German nominalizations

- Morphologically ergative languages tend to have nominative-accusative syntax, but the absolutive restriction on extraction has been considered a case of real syntactic ergativity (cf. Polinsky 2007, illustrating it for Chukchi).

- The absolutive restriction seems to hold in wh-movement from German nominalized infinitives.

(42) a. ?[Wovon] _ hast du [DP das Zerstören t] [durch den Kaiser] beobachtet?  
VON what have you the destroy.INF DURCH the emperor observed  
– Von der Hauptstadt.  
VON the capital  
≈ ‘Of what did you observe the emperor’s destroying? – Of the capital.’

b. ?[Von wem] _ hast du [DP das Ermorden t] [durch den Kaiser]  
VON who have you the murder.INF DURCH the emperor observed  
VON the unfaithful senator  
≈ ‘Of who did you observe the emperor’s murdering? – Of the unfaithful senator.’

DURCH what have you the destroy.INF VON the capital observed  
– Durch eine Atombombe.  
DURCH a atomic.bomb  
≈ ‘By what did you observe the destroying of the capital? – By an atomic bomb.’

DURCH who have you the murder.INF VON the unfaithful senator observed  
DURCH the emperor  
≈ ‘By who did you observe the murdering of the unfaithful senator? – By the emperor.’
The conative alternation (which might be taken to be a type of antipassive) can feed extraction of the derived absolutive:

(44) a.*?[Durch wen] hast du [DP das Prügeln [vom ungezogenen Schüler] t] beobachtet?
DURING who have you the beat.INF VON.the naughty pupil observed
– Durch den Musiklehrer.
DURING the music.teacher
≈ ‘By who did you observe the beating of the naughty pupil? – By the music teacher.’

b. [Vom wem] hast du [DP das Ein-prügeln [auf den ungezogenen Schüler] t] beobachtet?
VON who have you the AFF-beat.INF at the naughty pupil observed VON.the music.teacher
≈ ‘Of who did you observe the beating at the naughty pupil? – Of the music teacher.’

The absolutive restriction also seems to hold in relativization that involves extraction from German nominalized infinitives.

the state VON the the destroy.INF DURING the emperor me upsets will perish
≈ ‘The state of which the destroying by the emperor upsets me will perish.’

the emperor DURING the the destroy.INF VON.the state me upsets will perish
≈ ‘The emperor by who the destroying of the state upsets me will perish.’
References


