

# Dative and indirect object in German dialects: Evidence from relative clauses

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## Abstract

This paper is about the relationship between dative case and the indirect object, i.e. about the linking between a morphological case and a grammatical role. The primary evidence is taken from relative clause data in German dialects (two other continental West Germanic varieties, Yiddish and a North Frisian dialect, are taken into account as well). The typical morphological systems of some of the varieties treated are briefly discussed; it turns out that in contrast to Standard German, some German dialects do not have a separate morphological dative case. Then, indirect object relative clauses are compared to direct object relative clauses with respect to case-encoding. If direct object relative clauses require overt case marking, then indirect object relative clauses do as well, but not vice versa: it is a pattern not uncommon among the varieties investigated that indirect object relative clauses require case marking while this is optional or impossible in direct object relative clauses. Furthermore, case matching plays a decisive role for indirect object relative clause formation in some of the varieties investigated.

## 1 Introduction

### 1.1 Accessibility Hierarchy and Case Hierarchy

In their study on relative clauses, deriving generalizations from a sample of about fifty languages, Keenan and Comrie (1977) formulate the Accessibility Hierarchy, a hierarchy consisting of six grammatical relations. If the lowest relations in it, genitive and object of comparison, are not taken into account, it coincides with the hierarchy of grammatical roles posited by relational grammar (see Maxwell 1979: 353, Blake 1994: 76, 88). The Accessibility Hierarchy reads as follows (the last two grammatical relations are omitted since they are irrelevant for the present study):

*Accessibility Hierarchy* (adapted from Keenan and Comrie 1977: 66)

subject > direct object > indirect object > oblique

The Accessibility Hierarchy is relevant for many syntactic processes; with respect to relative clause formation, the idea is that positions further up on it are more accessible to relativization than positions further down, and that languages allow relativization only on a continuous segment of the Hierarchy going down from subject to a certain cut-off point. It would be a natural pattern, for example, for only subjects and direct objects to be accessible to relativization in a given linguistic system via a certain primary strategy, whereas the relations further down on it are either not relativizable at all, or a different strategy has to be used for them (things proved to be somewhat more tricky in Keenan and Comrie 1977, but for our purposes these complications can be disregarded).

The indirect object position, which is the main focus of the present study, is labeled “perhaps the most subtle one on the A[ccessibility] H[ierarchy]” by Keenan and Comrie (1977: 72). It seems

to be rare that the indirect object has a relative clause strategy on its own: “For purposes of relative clause formation, it appears that many languages either assimilate indirect objects to the other oblique cases [...] or to direct objects [...]” (Keenan and Comrie 1977: 72). As we will see with respect to our sample, both patterns occur in German dialects.

For our discussion of indirect object relative clauses in German dialects, the notion of case is essential. Different versions of a Case Hierarchy have been proposed in the literature (see, among others, Blake 1994: 157–162); one formulation of it, which would hold for example for Standard German, is the following:

*Case Hierarchy* (adapted from Primus 1999: 18)

nominative > accusative > dative > other oblique cases

The Case Hierarchy can be viewed as the morphological correlate of the Accessibility Hierarchy: subjects are encoded by nominative case, direct objects by accusative case, indirect objects by dative case and oblique relations by oblique cases.

For relative clauses, Keenan and Comrie (1977, 1979) make a basic distinction between [+case] strategies and [–case] strategies. A relative clause forming strategy is [+case] “if the nominal element in the restricting clause marks the NP<sub>rel.</sub> AT LEAST as explicitly as is normally done in simple declarative sentences” (Keenan and Comrie 1979: 656).

The basic findings of Keenan and Comrie (1977) have been reinterpreted from a processing perspective by Hawkins (1999). In this paper, the Filler-Gap-Complexity Hypothesis (Hawkins 1999: 252) is proposed; it allows some predictions with respect to case-encoding in relative clauses. The Filler-Gap-Complexity Hypothesis predicts that since [–case] strategies are harder to process than [+case] strategies, they will be more often encountered in the higher positions of the Accessibility Hierarchy. On the other hand, [–case] strategies will be more often avoided in lower positions of the Accessibility Hierarchy, giving way to [+case] strategies in these positions (see Hawkins 1999: 256–258). It is for example a fairly natural and common pattern for a given linguistic system to display a [–case] strategy for the higher relations and a [+case] strategy for the lower relations: one possible cut-off point is between direct and indirect object, i.e., the given linguistic system displays a [–case] strategy for subject and direct object, and a [+case] strategy for indirect object, oblique etc.

## 1.2 Case

It is commonly assumed that “a case is established wherever there is a distinction for any single class of nominals” (Blake 1994: 4). Thus, even if a particular linguistic system displays a distinct case form in only one single instance, we have to posit the respective case for the whole system. For the (modern) Germanic languages the following basic finding (which makes them quite odd among the world’s case languages) holds:

In Germanic languages that exhibit a morphological case system it is noticeable that in noun phrases with a determiner, an adjective and a noun it is the determiner that displays the maximum amount of differentiation. (Blake 1994: 103)

Even among articles (and personal pronouns, which are even more prominent in displaying a maximal amount of different case forms), however, the maximum of case distinctions may not be realized in all items. For example, in the Standard German feminine singular article and personal

pronoun, nominative and accusative are not distinguished (the forms being *die* and *sie*, respectively); however, since for other items, including the corresponding masculine article and personal pronoun, nominative and accusative are distinguished (viz. *der* vs. *den* and *er* vs. *ihn*, respectively), two separate cases, namely, nominative and accusative, have to be posited. Similarly, although for example in the first and second plural personal pronoun, accusative and dative are not distinguished (the forms being *uns* and *euch*, respectively), two separate cases have to be posited since in other parts of speech, for example in the first and second singular personal pronoun, accusative and dative display different forms (viz. *mich* vs. *mir* and *dich* vs. *dir*, respectively).

As is well known, Standard German has four cases: nominative, accusative, dative, and genitive. As indicated above, there is a relatively straightforward correlation between the (upper) grammatical relations of the Accessibility Hierarchy and morphological case encoding (this holds for the main or subordinate clause in general and for the relative clause in particular): the subject is prototypically encoded by the nominative, the direct object by the accusative, and the indirect object by the dative;<sup>1</sup> the prototypical encoding for the oblique relation in Standard German would encompass the rare instances of genitive case as well as prepositional phrases subcategorized by the verb (note that adpositions can be viewed as analytic case markers, following Blake 1994: 9–13).

The German cases are, of course, not confined to encoding the grammatical relations. For example, while traditionally it is common to see the encoding of the indirect object as the prototypical function of the dative, dative is also used as the case required by a large set of prepositions. In terms of frequency, indirect object datives are much rarer than prepositional datives: for a corpus of Alemannic, Nübling (1992: 221) finds that 92% of all datives occur after prepositions. Numerically, the “prototypical function” constitutes thus a small minority. In text samples of German dialects, I had great difficulties finding examples of indirect object relative clauses (cf. 1.4).

### 1.3 Dative case in German dialects

In Old High German and Old Low German, there were five cases; in addition to the four cases known from Standard German, an instrumental is attested for some items. From a diachronic perspective, most (though not all) of the synchronically observable case syncretisms in Standard German and in modern German dialects (most of which have reduced their case systems to a far higher degree than the standard language) can therefore be seen as the result of recent mergers, not the continuation of old syncretisms. As holds for the modern Germanic languages in general (see 1.2), among German dialects case is least often encoded by the noun (although dative inflection of the noun has been preserved or even reinforced in a few German dialect areas; see Mironow 1957: 398–400):

Of the several constituents of a noun phrase, the noun itself is least often inflected for case. More frequently, the case of the noun phrase is exhibited by the determiners and such adjectives as may be contained in it. Noun phrase substitutes—the pronouns—are particularly sensitive indicators of the case of a phrase. (Shrier 1965: 420)

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<sup>1</sup> Note that this statement encompasses a definition of the indirect object (and the other grammatical relations) via case: the indirect object is encoded by phrases subcategorized by the verb that display dative case. This provisional definition will not do for all of the varieties covered by the present study, as will be discussed below (see section 5).

Among German dialects, we can observe some major differences from Standard German with respect to case. Most importantly, the genitive case is virtually non-existent in nearly all German dialects (see e.g. Mironow 1957: 392, Shrier 1965: 421, Koß 1983). If we take this into account, we are left with three potential remaining cases, namely, nominative, accusative, and dative (there seem to be no traces of the instrumental case functioning as such in any modern German variety). Of these three cases, dative has merged completely with accusative in some dialects; in these dialects, there is thus a two case-system distinguishing a nominative from an “objective” non-nominative case (encompassing direct and indirect object functions). Another pattern, merger of nominative and accusative, can be observed to a certain extent in many dialects as well, but this tendency never affects all parts of speech (for example, personal pronouns, unless specified for feminine or neuter gender, usually still distinguish a nominative from another case form). Since, according to our definition, “a case is established wherever there is a distinction for any single class of nominals” (Blake 1994: 4), this means that a nominative distinct from accusative is maintained everywhere, although many parts of speech actually do exhibit nominative-accusative syncretism (there is thus no dialect in which we could speak of a “direct” case encompassing subject and direct object functions for all parts of speech).

According to Shrier (1965), the case systems of German dialects can be divided into two broad groups. First, there are “[t]wo-case dialects, in which a Nominative is distinguished from an Oblique case” (Shrier 1965: 431). This type is characteristic of many Low German dialects, i.e. for the northern parts of the German language area. In these dialects, there is no separate dative case in any part of speech. If such case-syncretism can be observed, I will use the designation *non-nominative* to refer to the case marking in question.<sup>2</sup>

Second, there are “[t]hree-case dialects, in which all cases are distinguished in at least one part of speech” (Shrier 1965: 431). Three-case dialects are characteristic of High German, i.e. of the dialects in the center and south of the German language area, though this system “is maintained in each dialect area in different degrees” (Shrier 1965: 431). Within the three-case dialects, a further subdivision can be made that runs approximately north-south: in many eastern High German dialects, many masculine parts of speech display syncretism of accusative and dative, whereas in the western dialects, dative remains distinguished from accusative in the corresponding items (see Shrier 1965: 434). In addition, it deserves special mention that the traditional three-way distinction of nominative, accusative and dative is maintained in most parts of speech in a southwestern central region (see Shrier 1965: 434–435).

The four typical case systems discussed are illustrated by the following tables,<sup>3</sup> displaying paradigms of the personal pronouns of the first person singular, third person singular masculine and feminine, the masculine and feminine demonstrative pronoun and the masculine and feminine definite article (the demonstrative pronoun is also used as a relative pronoun in many varieties; the definite article is a shortened form of the demonstrative pronoun and in many varieties retains clear similarities to the latter; in some varieties, however, a secondary demonstrative pronoun, an equivalent of Standard German *dieser*, can be observed). In Table 1, a two-case system from a North Saxon dialect is shown. In Table 2, a three-case system displaying syncretism of accusative and dative in masculine items is illustrated by a Bavarian variety; Table

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<sup>2</sup> I refrain from the perhaps more usual designation *oblique case* in order to avoid confusion: the term *oblique* is also used for one of the roles of the Accessibility Hierarchy.

<sup>3</sup> The original, heterogeneous transcriptions of the sources have been maintained throughout this paper. This means that some of the examples appear in different systems of phonetic transcriptions while others display a dialect orthography or are even given in a Standard German equivalent. For one source (Steitz 1981), the original transcription has been simplified insofar as accents have been left out.

3 shows a three-case system from a West Central German dialect, in which many masculine parts of speech maintain a dative form different from the accusative (this holds for the personal and demonstrative pronouns; the definite article, however, displays syncretism of nominative and accusative). Table 4, finally, displays a fairly similar system, the only difference from the system illustrated by Table 3 lying in the fact that here, even the masculine definite article displays a nominative distinct from the accusative. Note that, for the third person singular personal pronouns, if syncretism of accusative and dative can be observed, it is not unusual that the former accusative and dative forms are distributed according to a new criterion: quite often, the former accusative form is used as a clitic, whereas the former dative functions as a full form (see Shrier 1965: 424, note 2, 426). In some dialects, however, the merger seems to extend only to the full (i.e., former dative) form, while the clitic form can only be used as an accusative; this holds for example for the Bavarian variety described by Weiß (1998: 87).

Table 1: case forms in the dialect of the Weser-Trave area (North Saxon, West Low German) according to Lindow et al. (1998: 151, 155, 168)

	1SG	3SG.M	DEM.M.SG	DEF.M.SG.	3SG.F	DEM.F.SG.	DEF.F.SG
NOM	ik	he	düsse	de	se	düsse	de
NON-NOM	mi	em	düssen	den	ehr		

Table 2: case forms in North Bavarian according to Schiepek (1908: 399, 407, 418)

	1SG	3SG.M	DEM.M.SG	M.SG.DEF	3SG.F	DEM.F.SG	F.SG.DEF
NOM	ī, i, ə	eə, ə	deə	də	sī, si, sé, s', sə	dōi	di, d'
ACC	m ī, mi	in, 'n, nən	deən	ən, 'n	sī, si	derə	də
DAT	miə, mə				iə, (ə)rə		

Table 3: case forms in the dialect of Großrosseln (West Central German, Rhine Franconian), according to Pützer (1988: 237, 255, 267)

	1SG	3SG.M	DEM.M.SG	DEF.M.SG	3SG.F	DEM.F.SG.	DEF.F.SG
NOM	ix	ɛr, ər	dɛr, dər	də	zi:, zə	di:	də
ACC	mix	i:n(ə), nə	'dɛ:nə, 'dɛnə				
DAT	mɪr, mər	i:m, əm	dɛ:m, dɛm	əm	ɪr, ər	dɛr, dər	dər

Table 4: case forms in the dialect of Oberschefflenz (Upper German, East Franconian) according to Roedder (1936: 129–130)

	1SG	3SG.M	DEM.M.SG	DEF.M.SG	3SG.F	DEM.F.SG	DEF.F.SG
NOM	iic, i	eɛr, ər	dɛɛr, dər	dər	sii, si, ʃ	dii, di	d
ACC	miic, mi	een, ən, n	den	də			

DAT	miir, mə <sup>n</sup> R	eem, əm, m	dem	əm, m	ərə	dɛrə	dər
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For many languages, it is commonly assumed that prepositional periphrases have compensated for lost case distinctions; for example, instead of a morphological genitive, a periphrasis using the preposition *von* is used in nearly all German dialects. As far as dative is concerned, however, I am aware of only two constructions that could be viewed as periphrases. On the one hand, in Alemannic and Bavarian, dative noun phrases can be augmented with the preposition corresponding to Standard German *an* or *in*, as illustrated by example (1), from Alemannic, taken from Seiler (2003: 15):

- (1) *er*                    *git*                    *dr*    *Öpfel*                    *a*    *mir*  
he<sub>NOM</sub>                    gives.3SG                    [the    apple]<sub>ACC</sub>                    PDM    me<sub>DAT</sub>  
‘he gives the apple to me’

While there are many arguments that the preposition in this construction is indeed a dative marker (I therefore call it “prepositional dative marking”, following Seiler 2003), at least for Alemannic this strategy cannot be viewed as compensatory: in Alemannic, a dative distinct from accusative is maintained very clearly (see Seiler 2003: 227).

Apart from prepositional dative marking in Upper German, I could only find one indication of a parallel construction in Low German by Koß (1981: 1248) quoting Behaghel (1928: 493), who, unfortunately, does not indicate in which Low German dialect this periphrasis occurs and does not give an example. The same periphrasis, however, can be illustrated by the following example of a Dutch (more exactly: Brabants) dialect, taken from Mironow (1957: 401, note 1):

- (2) *ōn*    *u*                    *zyster*  
PDM    the                    sister  
‘to the sister’

In Low German, this construction could eventually be viewed as compensatory to the loss of a distinct dative case; however, from the fact that I could not find any decisive examples of this construction in Low German, I conclude that it is very rare.

#### 1.4 The data

It proved to be quite difficult to collect the data for the present investigation. First, in spoken language relative clauses are not too frequent, and the same holds for indirect objects. The intersection of these two objects of study, indirect object relative clauses, is very rare; according to Weinert (2004), who analyzes among other things different corpora of spoken and written German, dative relative clauses are practically absent in spoken German (see Weinert 2004: 20–21). In collections of German dialect texts, indirect object relative clauses proved to be very rare to almost non-existent; I therefore could not make use of this potential source for the present study.

Second, a principal problem related to the topics and methods of traditional German dialectology has to be taken into account:

German linguistic geography has concentrated on phonology and vocabulary; if morphology has been considered at all, the regional fate of isolated morphemes has been plotted without reference to the system. Thus, the regional replacement of *ihm* by *ihn* has been mapped, but without regard to the question whether a surviving *ihm* represents a Dative distinct from an Accusative, or whether it represents a generalized Oblique case. (Shrier 1965: 420–421)

For that reason, atlas materials also proved to contain too little information. Therefore, the data of the present study are taken entirely from grammatical descriptions. Grammars have the advantage of ideally providing the fullest picture inasmuch as they should treat the subject exhaustively and give all the relevant data; even so, however, grammars can sometimes be shown to give misleading information with respect to relative clause constructions, and possible shortcomings in the interpretation may be traced back to this fact (cf. 2.2.1). Even among grammars, however, things proved to be quite difficult: although many grammarians consider the relative clause worthy of at least brief mention, only a minority of the grammars consulted contains enough information: it is a common pattern for a grammar to mention a relative construction, but to give only one example that illustrates perhaps the subject or the direct object, the indirect object not being especially mentioned. Naturally, the indirect object will be covered more often if it displays structures different from subject or direct object relative clauses. I could find quite a number of descriptions covering such systems, but surprisingly few describing in explicit words the same strategy for direct and indirect object relative clauses; this fact might be only a function of the (supposedly natural) tendency not to give explicit information on a construction that does not display differences on the surface level with respect to another construction just mentioned in the same paragraph.

In natural discourse, relative clauses are embedded in matrix clauses that display, as a minimum, one noun phrase and a verb. Since case relations of the matrix clause turned out to be important with respect to a certain phenomenon, I usually not only quote the antecedent noun phrase along with the relative clause, but the entire matrix clause. However, since many grammars only give examples consisting of an antecedent noun phrase and the relative clause, this is not always possible. Such examples are, of course, to some extent artificial (as data in grammars tend to be), and for some questions, this turns out to be a regrettable shortcoming of the sources consulted.

Most of the data discussed in the present paper are from West Central German and Upper German; this is due to the fact that in Low German and East Central German, many dialects seem to display largely identical relative clause patterns with respect to case-encoding; in West Central German and Upper German, however, many different systems can be observed, and it is a recurring pattern that even closely related dialects diverge with respect to their treatment of the indirect object in relative clauses.

## 2 Attested relative clause patterns

In a previous study on relative clauses in German dialects, I found with respect to relative clause formation that in virtually every variety a basic opposition exists between the subject and direct object, on the one hand, and the oblique, on the other. The intermediate position, the indirect object, either follows the pattern of the position higher than it, or the pattern of the position lower than it is used (see Fleischer 2004a: 231; most of the data discussed in Fleischer 2004a are presented more extensively in Fleischer 2004b). In the present follow-up study, the direct object

relative clauses of a dialectal system are compared with the indirect object relative clauses of the same dialect (taken from the same source wherever possible) to see if a cut-off point between direct object and indirect object with respect to case encoding can be located going down the Accessibility Hierarchy. The data to be discussed are presented in the following order: in 2.1, systems that display [+case] strategies as the only or predominant strategy for direct object relative clauses are discussed; in 2.2, systems in which the [+case] strategy for direct object relative clauses alternates with a [–case] strategy are considered; in 2.3, systems in which only [–case] strategies for direct object relative clauses occur are treated. It turns out that, for the second and third subgroup, both [+case] and [–case] strategies for indirect object relatives can be observed, whereas for the first subgroup, only [+case] strategies appear in the indirect object relative clause. Since one phenomenon that turns out to be important, namely, a case matching constraint, cannot not be covered by this typology, further data relevant for case matching are discussed in section 3.

One of the suggestions in a comment on Keenan and Comrie (1977) by Maxwell (1979) was to introduce a distinction between what he calls relative pronoun strategy and anaphoric pronoun strategy. This distinction can be exemplified by the elements encoding case in the relative clause: relative pronouns are elements that encode case and introduce a relative clause; since they introduce the relative clause, they are subject to movement (into SpecCP, to use current terminology) and are not in their original position. In an anaphoric strategy, on the other hand, the element encoding case does not introduce the subordinate clause; instead, it is located within the subordinated clause (usually, it will be *in situ*, i.e. in its original position; at most, such a pronoun can be subject to scrambling, but movement into SpecCP is impossible). While it has been challenged whether a distinction between these two types is tenable with respect to a universal definition (see Keenan and Comrie 1979: 657), for the data discussed in the present paper it is useful and unproblematic. I will thus make a distinction between relative pronouns and resumptive personal pronouns (which are the case-encoding elements in relative clauses that display the anaphoric pronoun strategy, in Maxwell’s (1979) terminology).

Relative clauses in German dialects, contrary to English, are usually not introduced by a zero element (if evidence from one area at the very northwestern periphery of the German language area is disregarded; see Fleischer 2004a: 226); thus, relative clauses are always introduced by at least one overt element. There are two principal types of introducing elements: pronouns and particles. As pronouns introducing relative clauses (i.e., relative pronouns), the most important type among German varieties is the pronoun *der, die, das* (this pronoun is demonstrative in origin and is usually also used in its original demonstrative sense and/or as a strong form of the definite article). Other pronouns, such as *welcher* ‘which’ or *wer* ‘who’, are quite rare (see Fleischer 2004a: 218, 232–233). As particles,<sup>4</sup> relative clauses may display *da, wo* or *was*<sup>5</sup> (others being quite rare; see Fleischer 2004a: 218, 233–234). The most important pattern to be encountered with these particles are relative clauses that are just introduced by them, case not being encoded at all. In some dialects, however, they may be combined with inflected pronouns: one recurring pattern is that a relative clause is introduced by the pronoun *der, die, das*, which is combined with one of the above particles. In another common pattern, the relative clause is introduced by an uninflected element, but displays a resumptive pronoun (usually personal) within the relative

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<sup>4</sup> It is most likely that these “particles” are in the C<sup>0</sup>-position and are thus actually conjunctions; since the exact categorial nature of these uninflected items is irrelevant for the present paper, however, I will continue to speak of particles, basically emphasizing that the respective elements do not exhibit inflection.

<sup>5</sup> Diachronically, *was* derives from a pronoun ‘what’, originally only interrogative, but subsequently used in relative clauses as well in some varieties; in many dialects, however, it gave up its original pronominal behavior and eventually grammaticalized into a particle (see Fleischer 2004a: 223, 233, Fleischer 2004b: 71–72, 80).

clause. Of these strategies, only particles not combined with pronouns are [–case] strategies; all patterns displaying pronouns, regardless whether relative or resumptive, are [+case] strategies. Thus, although the particles themselves do not encode case, they are not automatically tied to [–case] strategies since they can be combined with case-encoding relative or resumptive pronouns.

## 2.1 [+case] strategy in direct object relative clauses

If the direct object relative clause displays an inflected pronoun, the indirect object relative clause displays the same inflected pronoun as well. I could not find a single instance of a system in which for the direct object a [+case] strategy can be observed, whereas for the indirect object a [–case] strategy is used.

Systems displaying [+case] strategies for direct object and indirect object relative clauses are quite widespread in Low German and in East Central German (however, some, especially eastern, varieties of these large dialect areas also display [–case] strategies). They can be illustrated by examples (3)–(4) from the dialect of Altenburg (East Central German, Thuringian), taken from Weise (1900: 77), and by examples (5)–(6) from the dialect of the Weser-Trave area (West Low German, North Saxon), taken from Lindow et al. (1998: 174). In these dialects, the relative clause is introduced by the pronoun *der*, *die*, *das*, as in Standard German:

(3) *die Frau, die du gesehen hast*  
 [the woman]<sub>NOM</sub> REL.SG.F<sub>ACC</sub> you<sub>NOM</sub> seen have.2SG  
 ‘the woman whom you have seen’

(4) *das Kind, dem du das Geld gegeben hast*  
 [the child]<sub>NOM</sub> REL.SG.N<sub>DAT</sub> you<sub>NOM</sub> [the money]<sub>ACC</sub>  
 given have.2SG  
 ‘the child to whom you have given the money’

(5) *dat Peerd, dat ik an Wiehnachten kregen harr got*  
 [the horse]<sub>NOM</sub> REL.SG.N<sub>NON-NOM</sub> I<sub>NOM</sub> on Christmas  
 got had.1SG  
 ‘the horse that I had got on Christmas’

(6) *De Fuuljack, den se schreven harr, anter nich*  
 [the sluggard]<sub>NOM</sub> REL.SG.M<sub>NON-NOM</sub> she<sub>NOM</sub> written had.1SG  
 answers.3SG not  
 ‘the sluggard to whom she had written does not answer’

## 2.2 [+case] strategy alternates with [–case] strategy in direct object relative clauses

Systems in which direct object relative clauses allow both [+case] and [–case] strategies are very widespread among West Central German and Upper German dialects; furthermore this pattern

occurs in Yiddish as well. For the time being, it can be illustrated by example (7), representing the dialect of Großrosseln (transitional area of Rhine and Moselle Franconian, West Central German), taken from Pützer (1988: 268), and by example (8), from Yiddish, adapted from Mark (1942: 130); further examples are given below. In the West Central German variety, direct object relative clauses can, but need not display an inflected relative pronoun (bracketed in (7)), whereas the particle *wo* seems to be obligatory. Similarly, in Yiddish, a direct object relative clause introduced by the particle *vos* can, but need not display a resumptive personal pronoun within the clause (bracketed in example (8)). If the optional inflected pronouns in examples (7) and (8) are left out, we are dealing with [–case] strategies; if they are present, however, we are dealing with [+case] strategies. Case marking in these instances is truly optional and it seems to be the case that only stylistic,<sup>6</sup> not grammatical criteria determine whether the [+case] strategy or the [–case] strategy is chosen.<sup>7</sup>

- (7) *as kind (das) vo: ix men, is grong*  
 [the child]<sub>NOM</sub> (REL.SG.N<sub>ACC</sub>) PART I<sub>NOM</sub> mean.1SG is.3SG sick  
 ‘the child that I mean is sick’
- (8) *a fraynd, vos ikh hob (im) shoyn*  
 [a friend]<sub>NOM</sub> PART I<sub>NOM</sub> have.1SG (him<sub>ACC</sub>) already  
*etlekhe yor nit gezen*  
 several years not seen  
 ‘a friend whom I have not seen for years’

Dialects that form their direct object relative clauses according to this pattern can be subdivided according to the behavior of indirect object relative clauses: in some dialects, the [+case] strategy in indirect object relative clauses is obligatory or strongly preferred (i.e., pronouns have to appear in indirect object relative clauses), whereas in others it can, but need not appear (i.e., pronouns seem to be optional in the relative clause). These subgroups will be discussed in 2.2.1 and 2.2.2, respectively.

### 2.2.1 [+case] strategy obligatory in the indirect object relative clause

In many dialects in which direct object relative clauses can, but need not be of the [+case] type, the indirect object relative clause has to obligatorily be of the [+case] type, or this is at least strongly preferred. This can be illustrated by examples (9)–(10), from a Palatinate dialect (Rhine Franconian, West Central German), taken from Henn (1978a: 53–54). In the direct object relative clause, there are three alternative constructions: the relative clause can be introduced by *wo* on its own (the [–case] strategy), by the combination of *der, die, das* + *wo* and by *der, die, das* on its own (the latter two being [+case] strategies). In the indirect object relative clause, however, only the two [+case] strategies are possible, whereas the [–case] strategy, i.e. *wo* on its own, is

<sup>6</sup> Unfortunately, the grammatical descriptions consulted tend not to give clear information about the criteria that trigger the choice of the [+case] or [–case] strategy; I therefore conclude that the variation is merely stylistic, but it could be the case that closer investigation would reveal other criteria being at work.

<sup>7</sup> In other instances to be discussed further down, however, grammatical criteria are decisive: there, the [+case] strategy is obligatory unless case matching with the antecedent noun phrase occurs (cf. 2.2.2, 3) – which may also hold for indirect object relative clauses of the variety described by Pützer (1988), illustrated by examples (7) and (14).

ungrammatical.<sup>8</sup> The same pattern, though realized with different particles and pronouns, can be illustrated by Yiddish, which displays, as illustrated by the above example (8), optionality of the case-encoding resumptive pronoun in the direct object relative clause; in the indirect object relative clause, however, the resumptive pronoun cannot be dropped, as illustrated by example (11), from Jacobs et al. (1994: 416).

(9) *der Mann, wo / den wo / den wir kennen*  
 [the man]<sub>NOM</sub> PART / REL.SG.M<sub>ACC</sub> PART / REL.SG.M<sub>ACC</sub> we<sub>NOM</sub> know.1PL  
 ‘the man we know’

(10) *der Mann, \*wo / dem wo / dem ich das*  
 [the man]<sub>NOM</sub> PART / REL.SG.M<sub>DAT</sub> PART / REL.SG.M<sub>DAT</sub> I<sub>NOM</sub> that<sub>ACC</sub>  
 REL:A.SG.N  
*gegeben habe*  
 given have.1SG  
 ‘the man I’ve given it to’

(11) *a melamed, vos es iz im/\*?Ø zeyer shlekht*  
 [a teacher]<sub>NOM</sub> PART it is.3SG him<sub>DAT</sub>/\*?Ø very badly  
*gegangen*  
 gone  
 ‘a teacher that was very bad off (literally: to whom it went very badly)’

The same state of affairs seems to hold for the variety of Munich (Central Bavarian, Upper German), as illustrated by examples (12)–(13), adapted from Merkle (1975: 148–149): in this variety, as in Palatinate, relative clauses may be introduced by a combination of *der*, *die*, *das* plus *wo* or by one of these elements on its own. According to Merkle (1975), it is impossible to drop the pronoun in an indirect object relative clause, as illustrated by example (13), whereas example (12), illustrating a direct object relative, is fine. Note, however, that the antecedent noun phrase in (12) displays accusative case; as a matter of fact, as discussed by Bayer (1984: 221), Merkle’s indication that the direct object pronoun can be missing seems to be incorrect; instead, a case matching constraint seems to be at work, as will be treated in section 3.2.

(12) *den Manddl, wo i kàffd hãb*  
 [the coat]<sub>ACC</sub> PART I<sub>NOM</sub> bought have.1SG  
 ‘the coat that I’ve bought’

(13) *deà Mõ, \*(dem) wo dees keàd*  
 [the man]<sub>NOM</sub> \*(REL.SG.M<sub>DAT</sub>) PART that<sub>NOM</sub> belongs.3SG  
 ‘the man this belongs to’

<sup>8</sup> This comes out quite clearly from the description given by Henn (1978b: 342; italics added): “In der Mundart kann zur Einleitung eines Relativsatzes *wo* oder *der wo* oder *der* unter bestimmten Bedingungen verwendet werden. [...] In der Mundart kann die syntaktische Position unmarkiert bleiben, wenn es sich um Nominativ, Akkusativ oder lokale Angaben handelt. [...] Immer markiert dagegen ist die syntaktische Position, wenn es sich um Dativ handelt [...]”.

### 2.2.2 [+case] strategy optional in the indirect object relative clause

Systems like those treated in the preceding paragraph, with the indirect object relative clause obligatorily displaying a [+case] strategy while this [+case] strategy is optional for direct object relative clauses, are quite widespread. Optionality of case-marking for the indirect object seems to be rare. It seems to occur for example in the dialect of Großrosseln (transitional area of Rhine and Moselle Franconian, West Central German). As illustrated by the above example (7), in this dialect direct object relative clauses, can, but need not display a case-encoding demonstrative pronoun; exactly the same pattern seems to hold for indirect object relative clauses as well, as suggested by example (14), taken from Pützer (1988: 268). Note, however, that in example (14), the preceding noun phrase displays dative case, a fact not discussed by Pützer (1988: 268); this particularity may be indicative of a recurring case matching constraint that will be discussed in section 3.2.

- (14) *dər fra: (dɛ:r) vo: s gəʃefd gə'xe:rd*  
 [the woman]<sub>DAT</sub> (REL.SG.F<sub>DAT</sub>) PART [the store]<sub>NOM</sub> belong.3SG  
*xɔn ix 'blʊ:mə gə'brʊŋ*  
 have.1SG I<sub>NOM</sub> flowers<sub>ACC</sub> brought  
 'I've brought flowers to the woman the store belongs to'

### 2.3 [-case] strategy in direct object relative clauses

Among German dialects, systems that have only [-case] strategies for direct object relative clauses are probably less frequent than those that display optionality of case marking in these relations. Still, this is quite a common pattern, especially among Upper and West Central German dialects; furthermore, it is typical of North Frisian, and it seems to appear in some Low German dialects as well (not covered by the present study, however). Again, a subdivision can be made according to the behavior of indirect object relative clauses: there are dialects in which a [+case] strategy for indirect object relative clauses occurs, whereas in others, the same [-case] strategy as for direct objects is used.

#### 2.3.1 [+case] strategy in indirect object relative clauses

In some dialects displaying [-case] strategies for direct object relative clauses, a [+case] strategy appears in the indirect object relative clause. Such a system can be demonstrated by examples (15)–(16), illustrating the dialect of Wissembourg (Rhine Franconian, West Central German), taken from Siegfried (1952: 186), or by examples (17)–(18), illustrating the dialect of Zurich (High Alemannic, Upper German), taken from Weber (1964: 299). In the Wissembourg dialect, the direct object relative clause is introduced by *wo* only, whereas the indirect object relative clause displays a relative pronoun depending on a reinforcing preposition.<sup>9</sup> In Zurich German, a

<sup>9</sup> On prepositional dative marking, see Seiler (2003). According to Seiler (2003: 18, 263 [map 1]), prepositional dative marking is quite rare in the northern parts of the Alsace, to which Wissembourg belongs. Note that prepositional dative marking occurs mostly in Upper German dialects; the dialect of Wissembourg belongs to Central German, however, although it is still very close to the Upper German area.

direct object relative clause is introduced by the particle *wo*, while for the indirect object, a resumptive personal pronoun has to appear within the clause:

- (15) *də* *ɛʂl* *vu* *is'* *ghǎfd* *håbh*  
 [the donkey]<sub>NOM</sub> PART I<sub>NOM</sub> bought have.1SG  
 'the donkey that I've bought'
- (16) *də* *bū* *in* *dɛm* *vūs* *gɛvə* *hǎʃ*  
 [the boy]<sub>NOM</sub> PDM REL.SG.M<sub>DAT</sub> PART=it<sub>ACC</sub> given have.2SG  
 'the boy to which you've given it'
- (17) *Bikanti,* *won* *i* *scho* *lang* *nüme* *gsee* *hä*  
 acquaintances<sub>NOM</sub> PART I<sub>NOM</sub> already long no seen have.1SG  
 'acquaintances I haven't seen since long'
- (18) *Lüüt,* *wo* *me* *ne [...]* *nüd* *cha* *hålfte*  
 people<sub>NOM</sub> PART one them<sub>DAT</sub> not can.3SG help  
 'people who cannot be helped'

### 2.3.2 [-case] strategy in indirect object relative clauses

In some dialects in which a [-case] strategy is used for direct object relative clauses, the same [-case] strategy is also used for indirect object relative clauses. Such systems can be exemplified by examples (19)–(20), taken from Steitz (1981: 126), illustrating the dialect of Saarbrücken (transitional area of Rhine and Moselle Franconian, West Central German), displaying *wo* as the particle introducing the relative clause, or by examples (21)–(22), from Jörgensen (1978: 23), illustrating a North Frisian variety in which an equivalent of German *was* as relative particle occurs:

- (19) *əs* *bu:x,* *vo:* *də* *lɛ:rər* *had*  
 [the book]<sub>NOM</sub> PART [the teacher]<sub>NOM</sub> has.3SG  
*əm* *bu:b* *gɛb*  
 [the boy]<sub>DAT</sub> given  
 'the book the teacher has given to the boy'
- (20) *də* *bu:b,* *vo:* *də* *lɛ:rər* *had*  
 [the boy]<sub>NOM</sub> PART [the teacher]<sub>NOM</sub> has.3SG  
*s* *bu:x* *gɛb*  
 [the book]<sub>ACC</sub> given  
 'the boy the teacher has given the book to'
- (21) *di* *moon,* *wat* *ik* *sänj* *hääw*  
 [the man]<sub>NOM</sub> PART I<sub>NOM</sub> seen have.1SG  
 'the man I've seen'

- (22) *di dring, wat ik en mårk dånj häaw*  
 [the boy]<sub>NOM</sub> PART I<sub>NOM</sub> [a mark]<sub>NON-NOM</sub> given have.1SG  
 ‘the boy I’ve given a mark to’

In section 3.2 further data that might belong to this subgroup are discussed; there, however, a restriction with respect to the case of the antecedent noun phrase may play a role: the antecedent noun phrase has to display dative case, it has thus to match with the case required by the verb of the relative clause. Note that in the above two examples, this restriction does not apply (example (20) displays nominative in the antecedent, whereas in North Frisian, as in Low German, no separate dative exists).

### 3 Discussion: case matching

In some dialects, instances of a case matching constraint on indirect object relative clauses displaying [–case] strategies seem to exist: in these dialects (which, to be sure, know [–case] strategies for direct object relative clauses) it seems to be the case that, as mentioned in passing in 2.2.2 and 2.3.2, [–case] strategies in the indirect object are only possible if the antecedent noun phrase displays dative case; otherwise, a (relative or resumptive personal) pronoun displaying dative case within the relative clause has to appear, i.e., if the head noun displays another case than dative, the [+case] strategy is obligatory.

#### 3.1 Case matching in free relative clause formation in Standard German

Similar phenomena have been observed primarily with respect to free relatives: thus, for (Standard) German it is usually stated, as indicated by Pittner (1991: 341), that free relative clauses obligatorily display case matching (but see below). If a case conflict between the subcategorization frames of the subordinate and the matrix verb occurs, different things may happen; for Finnish Bresnan and Grimshaw (1978: 373) in their seminal paper on free relatives observed that “[w]hen the case requirements of the matrix and subordinate verb conflict, the head of the free relative clause agrees with the subordinate verb”; this holds, however, only if a certain configuration takes place (for which the notion of “unmarked case”, corresponding to structural case, is crucial; see Bresnan and Grimshaw 1978: 374).

As a matter of fact, in case conflict situations the Case Hierarchy introduced in section 1.1 seems to be relevant. For (Standard) German free relatives, Pittner (1991: 342) has formulated a rule according to which the case of the matrix verb need not be realized if it is higher in the Case Hierarchy than the case of the subordinate verb; if its is the other way around, the free relative clause is ungrammatical.<sup>10</sup> This generalization explains the grammaticality of examples (23) and (24)a, taken from Pittner (1991: 341, 342, respectively): in (23), the matrix verb requires accusative and the subordinate verb requires dative case; the free relative displays dative case, as required by the subordinate verb, which is lower in the Case Hierarchy than the case required by the matrix verb; hence, the result is grammatical. In (24)a, however, the matrix verb requires

<sup>10</sup> Note that the version of the Case Hierarchy used by Pittner (1991) differs in one respect from the version introduced in section 1.1: in Pittner’s (1991) version, dative and other oblique cases (which are, in the case of German, mainly prepositional cases) are conflated to one category. Since our discussion only relates to possible differences between dative and the cases higher up in the Case Hierarchy, this difference can be disregarded.

dative case, while the subordinate verb requires accusative; if the free relative clause displays the case required by the subordinate verb, which is higher in the Case Hierarchy than the case of the matrix verb, the result is ungrammatical, as illustrated by (24)a. Note that in such a configuration, it is impossible to form a free relative clause at all; if the relative pronoun fulfills the subcategorization requirements of the matrix verb while neglecting those of the subordinated verb, the result is equally ungrammatical, as illustrated by (24)b (the same holds for Finnish free relative clauses; see Bresnan and Grimshaw 1978: 373).

(23) *Sie lädt ein, wem sie zu Dank verpflichtet ist*  
 she<sub>NOM</sub> invites.3SG PTCL who<sub>DAT</sub> she<sub>NOM</sub> to thank obliged is.3SG  
 ‘she invites whom she is obliged to thank’

(24) a. *\*Er vertraut, wen er kennt*  
 he<sub>NOM</sub> trusts.3SG who<sub>ACC</sub> he<sub>NOM</sub> knows.3SG  
 ‘he trusts whom he knows’

(24) b. *\*Er vertraut, wem er kennt*  
 he<sub>NOM</sub> trusts.3SG who<sub>DAT</sub> he<sub>NOM</sub> knows.3SG  
 ‘he trusts whom he knows’

It is crucial that the constraints on free relative clause formation that can be explained in terms of the Case Hierarchy relate to surface case, not to case at a more abstract level (see Pittner 1991: 342): For example, although a configuration consisting of a subordinated verb requiring nominative and a matrix verb requiring accusative would be ruled out as ungrammatical, this configuration is fine if the pronoun involved displays nominative-accusative syncretism: this explains the grammaticality of examples (25) and (26), taken from Pittner (1991: 342): (25) is ungrammatical (the pronoun distinguishes a nominative *wer* ‘who’ from an accusative *wen* ‘whom’), but (26) is grammatical (the pronoun does not distinguish between a nominative and an accusative form, both are *was* ‘what’):

(25) *\*Er zerstört, wer ihm in die Quere kommt*  
 he<sub>NOM</sub> destroys.3SG who<sub>NOM</sub> him<sub>DAT</sub> in the way comes.3SG  
 ‘he destroys who crosses his path’

(26) *\*Er zerstört, was ihn behindert*  
 he<sub>NOM</sub> destroys.3SG what<sub>NOM</sub> him<sub>ACC</sub> obstructs.3SG  
 ‘he destroys what obstructs him’

### 3.2 Case matching in relative clause formation in German dialects

The patterns to be observed in Standard German free relative clause formation are parallel to the phenomena observed for example in Bavarian, as pointed out by Pittner (1996: 136), quoting data from Bayer (1984). Similar patterns also occur in other German dialects, which are to be discussed now.

In many instances, the data situation is somewhat problematic: Unfortunately, many grammatical descriptions give examples of indirect object relative clauses displaying a preceding dative noun phrase (while the antecedent noun phrases of their examples for subject or direct object relative

clauses display nominative) without discussing this particularity. It is very likely that in these cases the case matching constraint is actually the reason for the data given in the grammatical descriptions, but we cannot be completely sure on this, however. This is for example the case of Pützer (1988), describing the dialect of Großrosseln, illustrated by the above examples (7) and (14), and the same also holds for Wanner (1908: 348), describing the dialect of Zaisenhausen (Rhine Franconian, West Central German), which furnishes example (27): in this variety, relative clauses are introduced by *wo* on its own, and this seems to hold also in the indirect object, as illustrated by (27). This example, however, displays dative case in the antecedent noun phrase, a fact not discussed by Wanner (1908). For the dialects of Zaisenhausen and Großrosseln, it is very likely that the case matching constraint for indirect object relative clauses does exist, but this cannot be stated with certainty since the respective grammatical descriptions give no explicit information on this phenomenon (a similar example, illustrating an Upper Saxon variety is treated in Fleischer 2004a: 223–224, 2004b: 72, note 7).

(27) *i hans təm man ksaait,*  
 I<sub>NOM</sub> have.1SG=it<sub>ACC</sub> [the man]<sub>DAT</sub> said  
*wu tw kaaptə kheept*  
 PART [the garden]<sub>NOM</sub> belongs.3SG  
 ‘I’ve said it to the man the garden belongs to’

In some grammars, however, the case matching constraint is described more explicitly. In the dialect of Oberschefflenz (East Franconian, Upper German), direct object relative clauses are introduced by the particle *wo* not accompanied by any pronoun; in the indirect object, the same construction is possible, as illustrated by example (28), taken from Roedder (1936: 132):

(28) *dər maa<sup>n</sup>, wu i des gewə hab*  
 [the man]<sub>NOM</sub> PART I<sub>NOM</sub> that<sub>ACC</sub> given have.1SG  
 ‘the man I’ve given it to’

However, Roedder (1936: 132) comments that such a structure would be rare and that instead, one would rather find:

(29) *dem maa<sup>n</sup>, wu i des gewə hab,*  
 [the man]<sub>DAT</sub> PART I<sub>NOM</sub> that<sub>ACC</sub> given have.1SG  
*dər hot gsaat*  
 this<sub>NOM</sub> has.3SG said  
 lit. ‘to the man I’ve given it to, this one has said’

This construction displays two differences compared to the construction of example (28): the antecedent noun phrase displays dative case, and resumption of the subject of the matrix clause by a demonstrative pronoun after the relative clause takes place (note that for example (28), Roedder 1936 does not give a matrix verb). Such a construction is sometimes referred to as

“inverse attraction” (*attractio inversa*).<sup>11</sup> Since there is resumption of the subject of the matrix clause by a demonstrative pronoun, such a construction should probably be viewed as an instance of left dislocation, as argued by Pittner (1996: 123), who discusses among other things a parallel Middle High German example.

Even clearer is the description given by Schiepek (1899: 52), illustrating a dialect of the Egerland (North Bavarian, Upper German). In this variety, relative clauses may be introduced by the particle *was* not accompanied by a pronoun, and this seems to hold for subject, direct object and indirect object relative clauses alike. However, such indirect object relative clauses are possible only if the antecedent noun phrase displays dative case. Example (30)a, in which the antecedent is in the nominative, can only be interpreted as being a subject relative clause; if the antecedent noun phrase is in the dative, however, as in example (30)b, which furnishes a minimal pair with (30)a, it is interpreted as an indirect object relative clause.<sup>12</sup>

(30) a.    *ə*    *Mensch,*    *wos*    *nemməts*    *ən*    *Pfennich*    *gitt*  
           [a    man]<sub>NOM</sub>    PART   nobody<sub>NOM</sub>    [a    penny]<sub>ACC</sub>    gives.3SG  
           ‘a man who doesn’t give a penny to anybody’ (\*‘a man nobody gives a penny to’)

(30) b.    *ən*    *Menschn,*    *wos*    *nemməts*    *ən*    *Pfennich*    *gitt*  
           [a    man]<sub>DAT</sub>    PART   nobody<sub>NOM</sub>    [a    penny]<sub>ACC</sub>    gives.3SG  
           ‘to a man nobody gives a penny to’

Examples such as (29) and (30)b, but probably also (14) and (27), for which I suspect that the authors of the respective grammatical descriptions did not capture (or mention) this particularity, are thus instances of a case matching constraint. It can be stated as follows: the [–case] strategy that the respective dialect uses for direct object relative clauses can only be used for indirect object relative clauses if the antecedent displays dative case.

Now, as indicated above, in many Bavarian varieties not only indirect object relatives seem to be subject to such a case matching constraint. As discussed in 2.2.1, in the variety of Munich relative clauses are either introduced by a combination of the pronoun *der*, *die*, *das* with the particle *wo* or by one of these elements on its own. Contrary to many West Central German systems illustrated in 2.2, however, dropping of the pronoun is impossible for direct object relatives in which the relativized noun displays masculine gender, unless it displays accusative

<sup>11</sup> The classical notion of *attractio* covers constructions in which the relative pronoun displays the case that is required by the matrix verb rather than the case required by the verb of the relative clause (it shares the case of its antecedent noun phrase, hence the term *attractio*). In *attractio inversa*, the opposite occurs: the case of the relative pronoun, required by the verb of the relative clause, is taken over by the antecedent noun phrase. Thus, in the Latin example *Hunc adulescentem quem vides, malo astro natus est*, the case of the relative pronoun, accusative, is taken over by the antecedent noun, in this case the subject (see Lehmann 1984: 185). There are important differences to the East Franconian construction of example (29); most importantly, in East Franconian there is no pronoun displaying dative case within the relative clause. Still, there is a shared element: the antecedent displays the case that would be required in the relative clause – even if in the East Franconian example, dative case does not appear overtly within the relative clause.

<sup>12</sup> The description given by Schiepek (1899) is quite explicit with respect to indirect object relative clauses: “Der Gebrauch des undeclinablen *wos* unterliegt allerdings gewissen Beschränkungen. Als unveränderliche Relativpartikel kann es den Unterschied der Casus nicht ausdrücken, und deshalb tritt es nie für einen Casus obliquus (= dem, der, denen) ein, falls das Bezugswort nicht in dem gleichen Casus steht und so auch mit seiner Form auf das Relativ hinüberwirken kann.” (Schiepek 1899: 52; italics added).

case, as in example (12); dropping of the pronoun with feminine, neuter or plural nouns is fine though. This is illustrated by examples (31) and (32), taken from Bayer (1984: 216).<sup>13</sup>

(31) *der Mantl \*(den) wo i kaffd hob*  
 [the coat]<sub>NOM</sub> \*(REL.SG.M<sub>ACC</sub>) PART I<sub>NOM</sub> bought have.1SG  
*wor z'rissn*  
 was.3SG torn  
 'the coat that I bought was torn'

(32) *die Lampn (die) wo i g'seng hob*  
 [the lamp]<sub>NOM</sub> (REL.SG.F<sub>ACC</sub>) PART I<sub>NOM</sub> seen have.1SG  
*wor greißlich*  
 was.3SG ugly  
 'the lamp that I saw was ugly'

These data suggest that it is not a property of the direct object as such to allow dropping of the pronoun; rather, case matching is decisive: if the case of the antecedent and the demonstrative pronoun introducing the relative clause match, the latter may be dropped; otherwise, the pronoun is obligatory. Note, however, that the case matching constraint relates to the surface form, not to case at a more abstract level, as we have seen in section 3.1 with respect to free relative clauses in Standard German: since in feminine gender, nominative and accusative of the demonstrative pronoun display the same forms, (32) is grammatical, although the antecedent displays nominative case while the relative pronoun is in the accusative. In (31), however, the nominative form of the relative pronoun, required by the matrix verb, would be different from the accusative required by the subordinated verb, hence this example is ungrammatical. As a matter of fact, also in indirect object relative clauses, contrary to the indications given by Merkle (1975), dropping of the pronoun is fine if the antecedent noun phrase displays dative case – just as in many other varieties discussed above. This can be illustrated by example (33), from Bayer (1984: 221):

(33) *sie gem's dem Mo (dem) wo mir*  
 they<sub>NOM</sub> give.3PL=it<sub>ACC</sub> [the man]<sub>DAT</sub> (REL.SG.M<sub>DAT</sub>) PART we<sub>NOM</sub>  
*g'hoifa hom*  
 helped have.1PL  
 'they give it to the man whom we have helped'

In other words, for Central Bavarian, at least, it is not the direct object as such that allows dropping of the pronoun, but rather the case matching constraint. For the direct object, dropping of the pronoun is impossible for masculine noun phrases if the antecedent noun phrase displays nominative, because here, case matching is not fulfilled; in the feminine, neuter, and plural, however, dropping is fine since here, nominative and accusative display the same case forms. In these instances, the pronoun is thus optional; its appearance is not subject to grammatical, but rather to pragmatic conditions.

<sup>13</sup> Bayer (1984) does not indicate from which source his data are taken; since he quotes Merkle (1975), however, I conclude that they are representative for Central Bavarian. Note that in this Central Bavarian variety, separate accusative and dative masculine forms of the pronoun *der, die, das* functioning as a relative pronoun exist, as illustrated by example (31), displaying accusative *den* vs. examples (13) and (33), displaying dative *dem* – seemingly contrary to the North Bavarian variety described by Schiepek (1899, 1908), where we find syncretism of accusative and dative for the respective item, at least in its demonstrative usage (see Table 2).

The question now arises whether the other varieties allowing dropping of the pronoun in indirect object relative clauses could be analysed in the same way. This question cannot be answered in a decisive way for many varieties, however, for the following reason: in many varieties displaying optionality with respect to case-encoding for the direct object, case syncretism of nominative and accusative plays a major role – most importantly also in the paradigms of the demonstrative pronoun (contrary to Bavarian). It is thus possible that in these grammars, the matching constraint exists, but applies vacuously in the direct object relative clauses. There is total syncretism of nominative and accusative in all genders, therefore constellations in which a conflict with the case matching constraint could appear do not exist – contrary to the dative.

In one instance, however, the case matching constraint can be shown to play no role for direct object relative clauses, namely, in the East Franconian variety described by Roedder (1936). In this dialect, as illustrated by Table 4, the masculine demonstrative pronoun as well as the definite article display accusative forms distinct from nominative (and dative); therefore, as in Bavarian, there is no matching of the overt cases between an antecedent displaying nominative case and a relative clause in which the verb of the clause requires accusative (or dative). Yet, Roedder (1936), who, as discussed above, describes the matching constraint for indirect objects, gives no indication that anything similar holds for the direct object; it thus seems that for this variety, at least, the matching constraint plays no role for the direct object. Rather, the fact that no pronoun is required in direct object relative clauses (of all genders, among them masculine, which is distinct from nominative), seems to be a property of this grammatical role, not of a matching constraint.

#### 4 Summary

The data presented in sections 2 and 3 are summarized in Table 5. It cross-classifies direct and indirect object relative clauses according to their relative clause-forming strategy with respect to case-encoding. The designations of the dialects discussed in section 2 indicate which relativization system occurs with respect to direct object and indirect object relative clauses. In addition, it is indicated whether the case matching constraint plays a role with respect to some [-case] strategies.

Table 5: Summary

	DO = [+case]	DO = [±case]	DO = [-case]
IO = [+case]	Altenburg North Saxon	Yiddish Palatinate	Zurich Wissembourg
IO = [±case]	–	Großrosseln [match.? Bavarian [match.]	?
IO = [-case]	–	–	Saarbrücken North Frisian Zaisenhausen North Bavarian [match.] East Franconian [match.]

key: DO = direct object relative clause, IO = indirect object relative clause, [+case] = [+case] strategy as the only possible construction, [±case] = [+case] strategy optional (alternating with [-case] strategy), [-case] = [-case] strategy as the only possible construction, match. = case matching constraint applies, – = system not existing

## 5 Conclusion

In section 2, we discussed relative clause formation with respect to case-encoding. It turned out that [–case] strategies for indirect object relative clauses exist in many varieties, including the dialect of Saarbrücken (West Central German) and North Frisian; the same pattern also occurs in a Westphalian variety (West Low German) or in a Low Alemannic dialect (Upper German); see Fleischer (2004a: 221–222, 224–225, 2004b: 65, 75). On the other hand, we have seen that in many dialects that have [–case] strategies for the direct object, this strategy is impossible for the indirect object; this is the case in Palatinate (West Central German), in the dialect of Wissembourg (West Central German), in the dialect of Zurich (High Alemannic, Upper German), and in Yiddish. Another logically possible pattern, however, the direct object displaying a [+case] strategy while the indirect object displays a [–case] strategy, does not occur; we can therefore generalize that if the direct object displays a [+case] strategy, the indirect object does so as well (but not vice versa), i.e., indirect object relative clauses have to be at least as explicit with respect to case encoding as direct object relative clauses. This implication is predicted by the Filler-Gap-Complexity Hypothesis (Hawkins 1999; see 1.1).

In section 3.2, we saw that a case matching constraint might interfere with this typology of case-encoding: in some dialects, [–case] strategies are only possible if case matching with the antecedent takes place; this criterion seems to play no role for the varieties already mentioned (in which the antecedent may display nominative case, at least judging by the examples given in the sources); it plays a decisive role, however, in the varieties of the Egerland (North Bavarian) and Oberschefflenz (East Franconian), and most likely also in the varieties of Großrosseln and Zaisenhausen (both Rhine Franconian, West Central German) and in an Upper Saxon variety discussed in Fleischer (2004a: 223–224, 2004b: 72, note 7).

If we look at the geographical distribution of these different systems, no clear areal pattern can be discerned; quite to the contrary, even closely related dialects tend to diverge with respect to indirect object relative clauses: for example, in the dialect of Saarbrücken, the indirect object displays a [–case] strategy not requiring case matching, whereas in the dialect of Großrosseln, case matching seems to take place; these two dialects are neighboring (Großrosseln is almost a suburb of Saarbrücken). The same can be stated with respect to two Low Alemannic dialects (see Fleischer 2004a: 231, 2004b: 80). Therefore, for the time being it can only be stated that there seems to be little correlation between the morphological type of a certain dialect and its treatment of indirect objects in relative clauses; the indirect object seems to be relatively unstable in the German diasystem.

There is no doubt that cross-linguistically, the indirect object is a valid category; as discussed by Keenan and Comrie (1977: 72–73), it is indispensable for the description of the relativization strategies of some of their sample languages. The question can be asked, however, if we need the indirect object for the description of individual grammatical systems if we can find no evidence of different behavior of it compared to other grammatical roles. The status of the indirect object as a grammatical role distinct from both the direct object and the oblique in German and Alemannic is established by Seiler (2003: 188–193) by using a series of different criteria (relative clause formation being one of them; other criteria are morphological encoding, passivization and binding phenomena). For dialects displaying a dative case distinct from accusative, the fact that we do find special morphological encoding for the indirect object is one argument in favor of establishing the indirect object as a separate grammatical relation for the respective dialect. However, for the varieties not displaying a distinct dative case, namely, North Saxon and North Frisian, the question can be raised if the indirect object is a category needed: In the North Saxon

variety covered in the present study, there is no difference between direct object and indirect object relative clauses (both display a [+case] strategy); the same holds for the North Frisian dialect (here, direct and indirect object relative clauses both display [-case] strategies). These varieties (which are probably representative of large parts of the northwestern German language area and for North Frisian, respectively), contrary to the other systems discussed in the present paper, display total merger of accusative and dative. An empirical generalization that can be derived from this fact is that dialects that display total syncretism of accusative and dative (i.e., a two-case system opposing a nominative to a non-nominative) do not display asymmetries between direct objects and indirect objects with respect to relative clause formation. It could therefore be the case that for these varieties, no indirect object has to be posited at all; this can be shown to be incorrect, however, if one looks beyond relative clause data. Even in dialects that do not have a dative case and that display the same strategy for direct object and indirect object relative clauses, there is still evidence that an indirect object as a syntactic role on its own exists. In English, passivization of indirect objects is fully grammatical (viz. *he was given the book*), but this does not hold for Low German, as becomes quite clear from the indications given by Keseling (1970: 355)<sup>14</sup> – although the West Low German and English case systems are largely identical. Thus, although for relative clause formation the indirect object is not a needed category for a grammatical description of these varieties, such a description nevertheless cannot do without reference to the indirect object if we look beyond relative clause formation. Since these varieties display total syncretism of accusative and dative, it can be stated that the indirect object, at least for these varieties, does not refer to case.

To conclude, I can only state that Keenan’s and Comrie’s (1977: 72) observation that the indirect object “is perhaps the most subtle one” on the Accessibility Hierarchy is also valid if a sample of closely related linguistic systems is investigated: in this study, it has been shown that German dialects (and two other west Germanic varieties) all sharing the same roots and spoken in a relatively small region display many differences with respect to indirect object relative clause formation, with no clear patterning to be discerned so far.

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## Abbreviations

ACC	accusative
DAT	dative
DEF	definite article

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<sup>14</sup> “In einigen niederdeutschen Mundarten, wie z. B. im Ostfriesischen, sind Dativ und Akkusativ morphologisch zusammengefallen, so daß in diesen Mundarten nur ein einziger Objektskasus existiert; Sätze mit indirektem Objekt unterscheiden sich aber weiterhin dadurch, daß nur die ersteren ins Passiv transformiert werden können [...]” (Keseling 1970: 355).

DEM	demonstrative pronoun
NOM	nominative
NON-NOM	non-nominative
PART	(relative) particle
PTCL	verbal particle
PDM	prepositional dative marking
PL	plural
REL	pronoun introducing the relative clause
SG	singular

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