03/09/05   **Ling 752**   **Tanja Vignjevic**

Preposition Stranding in German Dialects

1. Introduction and Typology

Prepositional stranding usually refers to a construction where a DP specified for +wh is moved and leaves the preposition that governs it behind (regular English prepositional stranding). Fleischer (2002a, 2002b) deals with a somewhat different but related phenomenon. He looks at movement that occurs with pronominal adverbs.

Pronominal adverbs are formed by combining R-pronouns[1] with prepositions. These expressions include for example *da*mit (there-with) *wo*mit (where-with) and *hier*mit (here-with). The R-pronouns *da, wo* and *hier* can combine with the following type of prepositions: monomorphemic, frequent and native words (*an, auf, aus, bei 'thereby, whereby', durch 'thereby,whereby', von 'of', vor'in front of'* etc.).

(1)   **Wo** träumst du denn immer __**von**?
             Where dream you then always of
             'What are you always dreaming of?

(2)   **Wovon** träumst du denn immer?
             Where dream you then always of
             'What are you always dreaming of?

In (1) the adposition *von* is stranded. Fleischer discusses the problems in terminology and whether the phenomenon should be treated as a case of prepositional stranding or rather postpositional stranding. The trouble is that some of these postpositions can occur as prepositions (not in combination with R-pronouns though) as well as postpositions. He adopts the term *stranding construction* for the phenomenon he is looking at.

The dialects that exhibit this stranding phenomenon include Northern German varieties although speakers of Southern German have passive competence of these constructions.

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[1] Expression coined to van Riemsdijk (1978).

Another complication is that there seems to be a split in behavior of these pronominal adverbs. It seems that combinations with prepositions that start with a consonant can exhibit a stranding construction as in (1) as well as a doubled construction as in (3). Whereas combinations with prepositions that start with a vowel can exhibit only the doubled construction but NOT the stranded construction.

(3)   **Da** freuen wir uns **dr**auf.
           there looking-forward we us there-to
           'We are looking forward to it.'

Fleischer points out that these conditioning factors are a problem for the view of syntactic autonomy. "… it is not possible to make the syntactic restructuring rule dependent on a phonological property…." (p. 122).

Furthermore the combinations with *mit* 'with', *da*mit (there-with) *wo*mit (where-with) and *hier*mit (here-with) exhibit an exceptional pattern. They occur in the stranding construction in almost all dialects of German with the exception of Bavarian and Highest Alemannic. Additionally, the Southern Dialects exhibit the doubling constructions in general.

2. Analysis

There seems to be a debate about whether there is an adjacency condition of the stranded preposition to the verb. This situation is found where we have an auxiliary and therefore the main verb appears to the right of the stranded element. The main point of the adjacency camp is that this patterns with general canonical government conditions of the verb in German.

3. Relative clauses

There are cases where the complement of the preposition 'can be missing'. Namely in relative clauses, sentence final position, elliptical idiomatic expressions and gapping constructions.

(4)   də vrynd, **wo** mər aməl   zind go tʃuute   **mit** hæt khyraatə
       the friend where we some-time went soccer-play with has married
       'The friend that we used to play soccer with has married.'
                              (Zurich German example from van Riemsdijk)

Fleischer argues that the empty element is not so much a DP but an R-pronoun. He argues that we can find examples like (4) with inanimate missing R-pronouns. He also doubts that (4) really can refer to an animate entity.

For our case matching topic we have the following situation. Case matching only happens in Southern dialects. Southern dialects however only exhibit the stranding construction with *mit* (see above). This means that we are basically down to just *womit* (with-what, with-whom). I tried to construct cases that involve case matching plus stranding. I'm not sure that I can judge these a 100%. But since (6) is parallel to (4) it should be possible.

(5)   Ich ha vo de Lüüt, **won=i (?mit)** (*mit=ene) i d-Schuel bin, scho lang
       I have from the people,**where-I (with)** in the school went,already long

       nüüt me ghöört.
       nothing anymore heard.
       'I haven't heard anything for a long time from the people with whom I went to school.'

According to (24) of Rajesh's handout mit is not allowed in (5). However, there is another possibility to have *mit*. This sounds fine to me and it is different from the non-existent *mit=ene* case. If this judgment holds (6) should be possible. But I guess we would have to ask a native speaker for a 100% judgment. If, however, my intuition is wrong, we don't have to worry about (6) because it is excluded for reasons other than stranding.

(6)   Ich ha vo de Lüüt, **won=i** i d-Schuel bin **mit**, scho lang
       I have from the people, **where-I** in the school went **with**, already long

       nüüt me ghöört.
       nothing anymore heard.
       'I haven't heard anything for a long time from the people with whom I went to school.'

For the Northern German dialects that do not exhibit case matching and have no restrictions on stranding all sorts of stranded elements in relative clauses can be found.

(7)   Vu est flent, **vus** du **met** g'schossn has?
       where is the-rifle, what you with shot has
       Where is the rifle that you shot with?

(8)   Et kint, **wu** er der fater **ven** isch
       the child, who he the father from is
       'The child whose father he is'

(9)   De Krankheit, **wo** he **an** le'en hett.
       The sickness where he of suffered has
       'The sicknes of which he has suffered.'

Some of the Northern dialects that allow for stranding in general sometimes prefer the doubling construction in relative clauses.

(10)   Das Geld, **wo** er seine Schulden ***da*mit** bezahlen kann.
       the money which he his debts there-with pay can
       'The money with which he can pay his debts.'

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