

Demystifying Bavarian complementizer inflection

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Complementizer inflection and complementizer agreement is at first sight something utterly strange. There seems to be no reason whatsoever why the agree-relation between T and the subject should be extended to C and T, or to C and the subject. Bavarian shows a perfect scenario of parallelism of agreement between C and T in 2nd person singular and plural. This parallelism is disrupted, however, in sub dialects which also use 1st person plural for C-inflection. No morphological parallel is found on T. Another problem stems from the fact that 2nd person inflection may show up on vocative particles, which seem to lack a corresponding clause structure altogether (cf. Bayer, 1984 and later publications by various authors).

In this talk, I will take these two observations as a starting point to argue that complementizer inflection in Bavarian cannot be properly understood as long as its origin in cliticization is ignored. I will argue that the inflectional element on C is a subject clitic which has been “orphanized” in the mind/brain of the language learner. Orphanization of X amounts to X’ paradigmatic delinking. It explains the otherwise strange fact of pronoun doubling. The fact that Bavarian offers a perfect scenario of parallelism of agreement between C and T in 2nd person singular and plural may be a historical accident which, at the same time, could have been a major trigger in favor of a categorial shift from actual clitic to perceived inflection.

The talk will start with the presentation of the core facts of Bavarian C-inflection and then move to the problem cases of 1st person non-parallelism and vocatives. My explanation of the facts in terms of cliticization plus diachronic reanalysis will then be followed by consideration of a number of phenomena which remain exotic under C-inflection as such but receive a straightforward explanation if C-inflection is taken to be cliticization in disguise. By taking a look at the Bavarian clitic system, we will be able to explain why the language shows subject agreement and subject doubling but no object agreement and object-doubling. I will then take a look at 1st conjunct agreement (or non-agreement), comparative ellipsis and sluicing. These phenomena will be discussed from the perspective of Bavarian syntax but with an eye on the current discussion of related Germanic dialects which show similar phenomena. I will finally draw the attention to the landing site of C-inflection. In Bavarian, this landing site, on the one hand, excludes full XPs and is, on the other hand, not limited to pure C-elements such as *dass* (“that”), *ob* (“whether”) and adverbial complementizers; it also includes wh-words such as *was* (“what”), *wer* (“who”), *wen* (“who-ACC”), *wie* (“how”), *wo* (“where”), *wann* (“when”) etc. I will follow Bayer and Brandner (2008) and Bayer (subm.) in arguing for word-size wh-movement as head-movement. If these authors are right, inflection targets a head (as morphologically required) but needs to do so in a syntactic derivation. This appears to be possible if C-inflection is a form of cliticization which has been subject to reductive reanalysis. It explains why inflection is normally conservative in the choice of the category of its host. In comparison, C-inflection is totally promiscuous.

I will conclude my talk with remarks on a model of change as reduction. In this model, Bavarian C-inflection can be explained in parallel with the reduction of the discourse particle *denn* to an agreement marker, as sketched in Bayer (2012).

Bayer, J. (1984) COMP in Bavarian syntax. *The Linguistic Review* 3. 209-274.

-- (2012) From modal particle to interrogative marker: a study of German *denn*. In: Brugè, L., Cardinaletti, A., Giusti, G., Munaro, N. and Poletto, C. (eds.): *Functional Heads. The Cartography of Syntactic Structures*. vol.7. Oxford. Oxford University Press. 13-28.

-- (subm.) Doubly-Filled Comp, wh head-movement, and derivational economy. ms. University of Konstanz.

-- & E. Brandner (2008) On wh-head-movement and the Doubly-Filled-Comp Filter. In: Chang C. B. & H. J. Haynie (eds.) *Proceedings of the 26th West Coast Conference on Formal Linguistics*. Somerville: Cascadilla Proceedings Project, 87-95.