

The syntactic representation of ADDRESSEE – evidence from *wh*-drop in Berlin German

Introduction Many German(ic) dialects possess a type of *wh*-question called *wh*-drop, where the *wh*-phrase is missing. *wh*-drop is illustrated for Northern Dutch in (1), and in (2) with an example from Berlin German (henceforth BG), which is spoken in and around Berlin and which will be the empirical focus.

- (1) *Kost m'r dat?*
costs me that
'What (=how much) does this cost me?'
- (2) *Machst=n du da?*
make=PRT you there
'What are you doing there?'

What little literature exists on *wh*-drop in German (Bayer 2010, Pankau 2020) agrees that the missing *wh*-phrase is deleted in SpecCP and that this deletion operation is licensed through some additional syntactic mechanism. In this talk, I first argue that the missing *wh*-phrase is not elided in SpecCP but in a position that it reached by clause bound A'-movement. Second, I argue that A'-movement to SpecCP is blocked because SpecCP is already occupied by an element encoding the addressee.

Core properties of *wh*-drop Despite the little research on *wh*-drop, core properties have been established. On the one hand, *wh*-drop is restricted to main clauses. On the other hand, *wh*-drop is impossible with [+anim] *wh*-phrases, cf. (3-4); ' _ ' marks the base position of the missing *wh*-phrase.

- (3) **Ick frach m'r, du=n da _ machst.*
I ask me you=PRT there _ make
'I wonder what you're doing there.'
- (4) *Is=n dit _?*
is=PRT that
OK 'What is that?' / * 'Who is that?'

Both Bayer (2010) and Pankau (2020) claim that only *was* 'what' can be dropped. For BG, the set of drop-pable *wh*-phrases is much broader and is basically possible with all [-anim] *wh*-phrases, as the examples in (5-8) for the R-pronoun *wo* 'what', the locative *wo* 'where', *wie* 'how' and *wann* 'when' illustrate.

- (5) *Hast=n du dè für engagiert?*
have=PRT you you for engaged
'What do you engage in?'
- (6) *Soll=s=n _ hinjehn?*
should=it=PRT go to
'Where do you want to go to?'
- (7) *Jeht=s=n dir heute _?*
goes=it=PRT you today
'How do you feel today?'
- (8) *Jeht=s=n _ los?*
goes=it=PRT loose
'When does it start?'

All examples from BG also feature the particle *n*. Although this element is obligatory in *wh*-drop in BG and has previously been taken as necessary for the licensing of *wh*-drop, its presence is clearly independent of *wh*-drop. First, it appears quite generally in unembedded *wh*-questions in BG (cf. Gärtner & Pankau (subm.)). Second, in Northern Dutch, no particle at all is needed in *wh*-drop, as revealed by (1).

Clause bound A'-movement in *wh*-drop The literature on *wh*-drop in German assumes that *wh*-drop elides a *wh*-phrase moved to SpecCP. Since movement to SpecCP in German is unbounded, this predicts that *wh*-drop is fine with a *wh*-phrase from an embedded clause. But this is not the case for BG, cf. (9).

- (9) (Wo) **gloobst=n du, dass=es _ hinjehn soll?*
where believe=PRT you that=it go to shall
'Where do you think we're going?'

At the same time, there is evidence that *wh*-drop in BG involves A'-movement and not some kind of *in situ* ellipsis. First, *wh*-drop is fine with parasitic gaps, cf. (10), which require overt A'-movement.

- (10) *Hast=n du, ohne _pg jekaut zu haben, glei wieder _ ausjespuckt?*
have=PRT you without _pg chewed to have soon again spit out
'What did you spit out immediately without having chewed?'

Second, although R-pronoun *wo*'s are licit in *wh*-drop, not all are. Witness the contrast in (11).

- (11) a. *Ham=s=n dè _ bei erwischt?*
have=they=PRT you at caught
'What did they catch you at?'
- b. **Kämpfst=n du _ jehng?*
fight=PRT you against
'What do you fight against?'

The difference is that *bei* 'at' allows movement of its R-pronoun *wo*, whereas *jehng* 'against' does not, cf. (12). In other words, only those R-pronoun *wo*'s are licit in *wh*-drop that can be A'-moved at all.

- (12) a. *Wo_i ham=s=n dè t_i bei erwischt?*
where have=they=PRT you at caught
'What did they catch you at?'
- b. **Wo kämpfst=n du t_i jehng?*
where fight=PRT you against
'What do you fight against?'

Wh-drop in BG requires an interlocutor addressee What has gone unnoticed so far in the literature is that there are also pragmatic constraints on *wh*-drop. First, when *wh*-drop is used in a clause with a 2.SG pronoun, this 2.SG pronoun is incompatible with a generic interpretation, as shown in (13).

(13) [Discussing with my friend John a problem he faces at work, I say: “Let’s think,]

*Kannst=n du da _ jetzt machen?**
 can=PRT you there now make
 ‘What can^{OK} you_{JOHN} / * you_{GENERIC} do now?’

Second, *wh*-drop is incompatible with *wh*-questions lacking an addressee, as shown in (14).

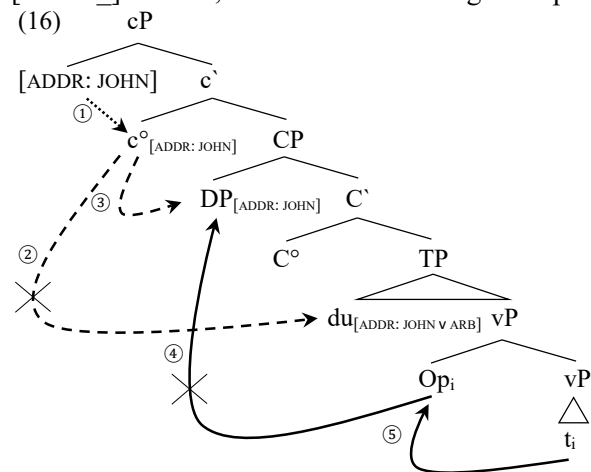
(14) [I call my friend John, (Wo) * bist=n du bloß _!?
 but he doesn’t pick up the phone.] where are=PRT you only
 ‘Where are you!?’

What unites both cases is the generalization in (15).

(15) *wh*-drop in BG requires a DP referring to the interlocutor-addressee

The notion INTERLOCUTOR-ADDRESSEE (henceforth IA) is taken from Portner et al. (2019: 4) and refers to addressees to whom the speaker specifically directs his utterance. These differ from generic addressees that lack this specificity. The generalization in (15) captures the exclusion of generic *you* in (13) since it does not refer to the IA *John*; when *you* does so, *wh*-drop is fine. In (14), no IA is present, so (15) requires a DP referring to no one. But there is (and can be) no DP referring to no one.

Analysis To capture the observed syntactic and pragmatic restrictions, I assume that *wh*-drop results from the failure of A’-movement to SpecCP, since SpecCP is already occupied. The element occupying SpecCP is a DP referring to the IA. To express this formally, I adopt four assumptions. First, SPEAKER and ADDRESSEE are represented in designated projections above the CP-level (Haegeman & Hill 2013, Zanuttini 2008, Speas & Tenny 2003, a.o.). In particular, I adopt Portner et al. (2019)’s idea of a cP, but locate it above CP. Second, the ADDRESSEE in SpecCP transfers its features to c°, which in turn must bind an identical DP that is inside CP (Portner et al. 2019: 23). Third, to identify the addressee, the ADDRESSEE in SpecCP is taken as an attribute whose feature is the interlocutor who the utterance is directed to. If the addressee is *John*, this gives [ADDR: JOHN]; generic addressees result in [ADDR: ARB], and unaddressed utterances have [ADDR: _]. Fourth, instead of A’-moving a *wh*-phrase, an empty operator is A’-moved to SpecvP. Consider



the structure in (16) for (13). The IA *John*, whose features are transmitted to c° (①), sits in SpecCP. c° now looks for a bindee. The subject *du* in SpecTP is not a possible bindee (②): German *du* always allows a generic reading, which excludes binding due to the lack of feature identity. To satisfy c°’s requirement, a DP identical to the IA *John* is merged in SpecCP and c° binds this DP (③). It is the presence of this DP that distinguishes the grammatical reading in (13) from the ungrammatical one. Since SpecCP is now occupied, A’-movement of a *wh*-phrase is blocked (④). Instead, an empty operator undergoes A’-movement to SpecvP (⑤), which in German is clause bound and licenses parasitic gaps (Webelhuth 1992), so the syntactic properties of *wh*-drop are

captured as well. The structure for (14) features an IA of the form [ADDR: _]. Since no DP exists referring to ‘_’, SpecCP cannot be occupied by such a DP, so that *wh*-drop is impossible in such a setting, exactly as desired. To capture the optionality of *wh*-drop in BG, I assume that cP is an optional projection in BG. This frees SpecCP from hosting a DP identical to the IA; instead, SpecCP can be targeted by regular *wh*-movement, which therefore is not subject to any pragmatic restrictions on the IA, as also shown in (14).

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