

Griaßde Sepp!

Josef, Bavarian, and linguistics

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1 1984: COMP in Bavarian syntax

The year 2737 after the creation of the Eternal City has brought not only the realization that Huxley's utopia is possibly more realistic than Orwell's is (it is the year when commercial television started in Germany) but also amazing insights into Bavarian grammar and syntax. Josef Bayer believed to have proven that "Bavarian conforms to the rules and principles that have been proposed to belong to Universal Grammar" (Bayer, 1984: 211) – and of all things, he furnished proof for it on the basis of phenomena that otherwise were (and partly still are) part of the collection of curiosities of dialects, namely:

Doubly-filled COMP

- (1) a. I woas ned wer daß des tōa hod (=8a in Bayer, 1984)
I know not who that this done has
- b. Der Hund der wo gestern d'Katz bissn hod (=10a in Bayer, 1984)
the dog which that yesterday the-cat bitten has

AGR-in-COMP

- (2) a. Du bis daß-st kummst (=50b in Bayer, 1984)
you until that-2SG come-2SG
- b. Ihr/es bis daß-ts kummts (=50e in Bayer, 1984)
you until that-2PL come-2PL

Today, both phenomena belong to the core of relevant objects of investigation in modern syntax – a development that has been promoted by Josef's seminal study on COMP in Bavarian syntax.

In my contribution, I will focus on greeting formulas in Bavarian. As I will show, their syntax is related to AGR-in-COMP which has been the object of a considerable amount of studies (cf. the references in Fuß, 2014) since its treatment in Bayer (1984). Inflected complementizers are a syntactic peculiarity of Continental West Germanic dialects (Weiß, 2005a), where they show a certain extent of variation. Although they are restricted in most dialects

to the 2SG (and/or PL), there also exist dialects with complete paradigms, especially in West Flemish, but also in Eastern Middle and High German dialects. One of these is the dialect of the well-known Sechsamterland (at least to readers of Eckhard Henscheid), a variety of North Bavarian, which lacks overt inflectional markers only in the 1 and 3SG—just like modal verbs do:

- (3) a. wálst
 because.2SG
 b. wáln 1PL
 c. wálts 2PL
 d. wáln 3PL

2 Bavarian greetings

Bavarian is known for its special forms of greetings among which *Griaß de/enk*¹ (*God*), lit. ‘Greet (i.e. bless) you-SG/PL God’, and *Pfiat de/enk* (*God*), lit. ‘Protect you-SG/PL God’, may be the most famous ones.² Both are abridged versions of optative expressions (*es grüße/behüte dich/euch Gott* ‘God may greet /protect you’) and are used in everyday life mostly without any religious connotations. In their short forms *Griaß/Pfiat de/enk* (which is mostly used), they consist of a finite verb in C⁰ and an object pronoun in the so-called Wackernagel position (WP). They do not show C-agreement, though inflected complementizers are at least diachronically connected with the WP, because the agreement markers used to inflect complementizers had their origin in subject clitics in the WP where they were reanalyzed as (part of the) inflectional morphology of the verb (Weiß, 1998; Weiß, 2005a; Weiß, to appear). However, among younger speakers of Bavarian, there have emerged new greeting forms—and this development has to do with C-agreement (as I will show).

As observed and reported in Zehetner (2000), there are new greeting formulas used by younger generations of speakers of Bavarian. This development is (probably³) restricted to the plural whose forms are given in (4a), (4b):

- (4) a. Griaßts eich
 greet.2PL you.2PL
 b. Pfiats eich
 protect.2PL you.2PL

1 In Bavarian, *enk* is the original dative/accusative form of the 2PL, which is normally replaced by *euch* in the speech of younger people (cf. (4a), (4b)).

2 Another curious expression is *Guad enk Nachd*, lit. ‘good you.PL night’, i.e. ‘I wish you a good night’, because it contains, to my knowledge, the only example of a proper Wackernagel clitic in Bavarian, i.e. a second position clitic—note that the Wackernagel position in German (dialects) is rather the third position (Weiß, to appear).

3 Though the existing singular form *griaßde* could be analyzed also in a way which would render it analogous to the plural forms in (4a), (4b), namely as *griaß-st-de* (cf. Zehetner, 2000: 118, fn. 57), there is, however, no comparable form with *pfiat*, i.e. *pfiatsde* is not attested (Zehetner, 2000). This makes it plausible that the respective development is indeed confined to the plural.

These greetings are semantically somewhat strange, because literally they are requests to greet or protect oneself. However, the verb used in the formula for to say good-bye (*pfiat*) is by no means part of the active lexicon of Bavarian speakers today. The form *pfiat* derived from the verb *behüten* (through schwa elision and assimilation of /h/ to /f/) which has also gone lost in its original form.⁴ I would therefore like to propose that *pfiat* is no longer a verb for younger speakers of Bavarian, but rather a lexeme comparable to the interjection *gel(l)* which can also be inflected like a complementizer (as already noted in Bayer, 1984: 246). A kind of corroboration for this suggested parallel can be seen in the fact that the interjection *gel(l)* also inflects only in the plural (Weiß, 1998):

- (5) a. gel'ts
Interj.2PL
b. gel'ns
Interj.Honorific

The inflection on the interjection is so to speak addressee-oriented and not so much marking agreement with a subject. I would like to propose that the inflection occurring on the lexeme *pfiat* in (4b) is of the same kind: it is more an addressee than a subject agreement marker.

Since the verb *griaßen* 'greet' is still part of the Bavarian lexicon, it is clear that we must look for another explanation for the development of (4a). As Zehetner (2000) noted, there is an interesting variant, namely *griaß-t enk* 'greet-t you.PL', which is a kind of missing link between *griaß enk* and *griaßts eich*. According to Zehetner (2000), this form could be an "analogische Angleichung an *Pfiat eich*," which means that the development of *griaßts eich* (4) occurred in analogy to *pfiats eich* (4b). That means, *griaß-* in (4a) is also no longer a verb, and the inflection marks the addressee rather than subject agreement.

One implication of this explanation is that the new greeting formulas would not so much be requests to greet or to protect oneself. However (and unfortunately), it does not provide an explanation for why this development was restricted to the plural.

3 Thank you

Thanks to Josef's work (among others), linguistics is concerned with dialect syntax. None of his minor achievements, however, is that Bavarian figures so prominently among German dialects within linguistics. In 2014, thirty years after Josef's study on COMP in Bavarian, a whole volume on Bavarian syntax (Grewendorf & Weiß, 2014) was published only containing linguistic contributions. For many of the contributors, Josef's work was the main inspiration to start investigating Bavarian in this way, that is to take the apparent oddities of this dialect as reflecting deeper regularities of a natural language. So it was for me: My own work on Bavarian syntax was constantly inspired by Josef and his deeply universal approach to investigate Bavarian—which is the mother tongue of both of us!

Josef, in this sense I would wish that you will stay with us for a long time. Please don't say to us and to linguistics: *Pfiat enk!*—nor *Pfiats eich!*

⁴ Since the schwa in prefixes like *be-* is obligatory deleted in Bavarian, *be-*verbs are not productive at all—in contrast to German (Weiß, 2005b).

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