Ergativity in German

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Ergativity in German

For Dorle and Simon

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Preface

This study is concerned with various descriptive and theoretical problems which arise in the study of German syntax. Its primary concern is to show that there are ergative structures in German the analysis of which leads to the conclusion that this language, like other Germanic languages, can to a certain extent be viewed as a *pro*-drop language.

The main objectives of this book can be summarized as follows. Firstly, it will be shown that many descriptive generalizations of German sentence structures that have gone unnoticed up to now can be accounted for in terms of Burzio's well known "ergative hypothesis". Secondly, an investigation will be undertaken into what consequences the existence of subjectless constructions in German has for the theory of *pro*-drop and related phenomena which are usually associated empirically and conceptually with the phenomenon of *pro*-drop (as, for example, the absence of *[that-t] effects, free subject inversion, the definiteness effect).

A crucial claim of the book will be that there exists in German an empty expletive pronominal subject. Proving German to be what has been called a "semi-*pro*-drop language", this study not only argues against a view that has been characterized as "pro *pro*-drop drop" it also differs quite substantially from approaches that abandon the extended projection principle and argue for the existence of subjectless clauses.

As should be clear from the previous remarks, the theoretical framework adopted in this study is the theory, developed in Chomsky (1981), (1982), (1986), that has become misleadingly known as the *Government-Binding-Theory*. This label is a misnomer because, as Chomsky himself pointed out during his lectures in Brussels in 1986, the concepts of "Government" and "Binding" are given undue prominence in a modular theory of universal grammar that is thought to consist of more subsystems of principles than just the government and binding theories. Throughout this study, I will assume that the reader is familiar with the central concepts of this approach, such as the notion of Universal Grammar, the distinction between principles and parameters, the theories of government, binding, Case, and control, the theta-theory and the bounding theory.

Within the relevant literature on the Government and Binding framework, there are two studies upon which the following investigations are primarily based. More than anything else, the content of the following

Chapters was inspired by the important work of Luigi Burzio on intransitive verbs in Italian. Similarly, what I have to say on *pro*-drop owes much to Luigi Rizzi's work on empty subjects and objects in Italian.

Chapter 1 introduces the so-called "unaccusative hypothesis" which was originally proposed by Perlmutter. Using the name "ergative hypothesis", Perlmutter's analysis has been elaborated upon by Burzio within the framework of the Government and Binding Theory. It will be shown in this Chapter how this hypothesis interacts with certain principles of Universal Grammar.

Chapter 2 presents empirical generalizations that can be accounted for in terms of the ergative hypothesis. After briefly illustrating the (well-known) pertinent generalizations in Italian, I will investigate fourteen German constructions, arriving at generalizations on such phenomena as auxiliary selection, impersonal passive, topicalization, extraction processes, control, focus, and reflexivization. I hope to demonstrate that the predictions vis-à-vis the ergative hypothesis arising from these generalizations are all borne out, thus giving strong support for this hypothesis as well as for the existence of ergative verbs in German.

Chapter 3 addresses theoretical problems of the *pro*-drop analysis. After a short survey of several versions of *pro*-drop parameters, certain phenomena will be analyzed that are thought to strongly correlate with the *pro*-drop property, such as the occurrence of postpositioned subjects at S-structure, the problem of assigning nominative Case into the VP, the occurrence of empty objects, and the definiteness effect. Moreover, independent arguments are presented which show that German is endowed with an empty expletive pronominal subject that shows up in ergative configurations as well as in constructions such as the impersonal passive.

In *Chapter 4*, a class of verbs will be examined that on the surface appears to behave much like ergative verbs. With regard to the Italian counterparts of a subclass of these verbs (the so-called psych-verbs), Belletti/ Rizzi (1986) have tried to show that they enter the same D-structural configurations as do ergative verbs. Relying on the ergativity tests presented in Chapter 2, I want to establish that contrary to the view of Belletti/ Rizzi, the corresponding German verbs have no derived subjects, i.e. their subject positions are theta-positions. The peculiar behavior of these verbs with respect to the surface order of their subjects will be attributed to their particular theta-grids ("theme"-subjects) as well as to focus properties of German.

Most of the work on this book was completed in 1986. An original version appeared in German at the end of 1985 as material for lectures held at the University of Frankfurt in 1986 and 1987. Since then, many colleagues and institutions have given me the opportunity to lecture on parts of this study at their universities or during informal talks and meetings.

I would like to express my gratitude to all of them for the critical, instructive, and encouraging way they contributed to the contents of this book.

Special thanks go to my friends and colleagues from the GGS (Generative Grammar South) Group. The regular meetings of this group of linguists from different universities in South Germany have not only led to the most stimulating discussions I have ever experienced, but were also characterized by a friendly and encouraging atmosphere of which I have fondest memories. This book would probably not have been possible without the many discussions I have had in this group with Peter Staudacher, Hubert Haider, Gisbert Fanselow, Sascha Felix, Tilman Höhle, Martin Prinzhorn, and many others.

I am grateful to Gaberell Drachmann for giving me the opportunity to present most of this book in lectures at Salzburg University during the spring of 1987. I benefited greatly from the discussions I had with him and Peter Hummer as well as with the other participants of the class.

During the 1987 GLOW-conference in Venice, I benefited greatly from discussions of certain ideas in the book with Adriana Belletti and Richard Kayne. Furthermore, I would like to thank Guglielmo Cinque for his comments and suggestions, and Frans Plank for pointing out to me some interesting facts on ergativity and passivization in German. I would also like to thank Bob Freidin for having given me the opportunity to give a lecture at Princeton and for interesting discussion with members of *The Program in Linguistics* there.

I am also grateful to Martin Prinzhorn for organizing the Fourth Vienna Round Table in the autumn of 1987, where I presented parts of this study and profited from the comments of Guglielmo Cinque, Jan Koster, Henk van Riemsdijk, Alessandra Tomaselli, and others. In addition, I have been able to discuss some of my ideas at the University of Cologne with Jürgen Lenerz, Thilo Tappe, Heinz Vater, and the participants of their seminar.

As I have already indicated and as should be clear from several Chapters, the contents of this study were inspired to a great extent by the work of Luigi Burzio and Luigi Rizzi. I should also like to mention that I had my first discussions on the work of these two linguists with Angelika Kratzer as we were both teaching at the Universities in Berlin during 1982-1984. I would like to thank her for this.

The English translation was done in cooperation with Ron Feemster. I am grateful to Paul Davies for his corrections. Susan Olsen read the whole text and suggested many improvements on both content and style. This book would probably not exist without the wonderful cooperation I experienced from her. I would like to thank her very much. In preparing the final text, I received excellent editorial assistance from Gereon Müller at the University of Frankfurt. I also owe a lot to my friend and Frankfurt colleague Fritz Hamm.

My final and deepest thanks go to Dorle and Simon, who provide me with the right atmosphere in which to deal with these obscure subjects of linguistic desire.

The Ergative Hypothesis

Language typologists generally distinguish between *ergative* and *accusative* languages. Although scholars do not agree about what an adequate explication of ergativity is (cf. Plank (1979)), characterizations of the following type (cf. Sasse (1978)) have won a following.

In ergative languages, the subject of an intransitive verb takes the same case (the "nominative" or "absolutive") as the object of a transitive verb, while the subject of a transitive verb is assigned another case referred to as "locative", "instrumental", "genitive", "agentive", or "ergative", depending on which ergative language one is dealing with.

This conception has sometimes been replaced by a characterization (cf. Plank (1979)) in which reference is made to construction-specific realizations of thematic roles. According to this view, accusative constructions are those in which a transitive agent appears as a transitive subject, and a transitive patient as a direct object. In ergative constructions, on the other hand, the transitive patient appears as subject, and the transitive agent is assigned a special oblique case.

Now it is not the case that languages are necessarily homogeneous with respect to an ergative or accusative syntactic organization. For this reason, the attempt has been undertaken to determine the degree of ergativity in languages depending on the number of ergative vs. accusative constructions they contain. It should thus come as no surprise that ergative constructions can be found in clearly accusative languages and vice versa. In German, for instance, the intransitive verb *sterben* (*to die*) (as opposed to *töten* (*to kill*)) occurs in constructions in which the patient role is realized as a grammatical subject.

Intransitive verbs whose surface subjects' grammatical behavior is similar in many respects to that of objects of transitive verbs have recently been referred to as *ergative verbs* (cf. Burzio (1981); the term probably stems originally from Sapir). This terminology was criticized as "helpless" (cf. Wunderlich (1985)). I would like to retain it nonetheless for the following two reasons.

First of all, we must consider the fact that the native speaker of an accusative language can only conceive of an ergative language *from the perspective of an accusative language*. Because, as I mentioned earlier, the

characterizations of ergative languages are – equally helplessly and probably inadequately – marked by this accusative view, it does not quite indicate "ignorance of the classical concepts of their discipline" (Wunderlich, p. 222) when scholars describe as "ergative" those intransitive verbs whose subjects – once again regarded from the perspective of an accusative language – exhibit properties corresponding to the properties of transitive objects.

Secondly, Wunderlich's own suggestion – of regarding these verbs as "genuine" intransitive verbs having not an agentive but a theme subject (and therefore calling them "theme verbs") – is no better. For it is not clear that all verbs with a theme subject exhibit exactly the same syntactic properties characteristic of the verbs which, following Burzio, are referred to as "ergative verbs". As will be seen, ignoring these differences leads to serious inadequacies. But let us return to our topic.

In his investigation of intransitive verbs in Italian, Burzio observes that for verbs occurring transitively as well as intransitively, the selection rules for the direct object in the transitive case correspond to those for the subject in the intransitive case. Consider the following examples:

(1)   a.   Die Sonne hat den Schneemann geschmolzen
          the sun   has the snowman   melted
          'The sun has melted the snowman'
     b.   Der Schneeman   ist geschmolzen
          the snowman   is melted
          'The snowman has melted'

(2)   a.   Peter hängt das Bild an die Wand
          'Peter is hanging the picture on the wall'
     b.   Das Bild hängt an der Wand
          'The picture is hanging on the wall'

Burzio calls the intransitive variants of these pairs "ergative verbs". His thesis is not only that the surface subjects of these verbs are D-structure direct objects, but that there exist many more ergative verbs than just the intransitive variants of pairs such as those introduced above.

Following the idea that ergative forms occur in constructions of the following type

(3)   [s [NP e] [VP V NP]]

and that they thus have the basic form of passive constructions (whereby the "type" of empty element in the subject position should remain open), Burzio returns to the point of view advocated in relational grammar (cf.

Perlmutter (1978)). In this tradition, the analysis given above is known as the "unaccusative hypothesis". Burzio's "ergative verbs" are referred to in this theory as "unaccusative verbs" and the "true" intransitive verbs as "unergative verbs". The correspondence to D-structure passive constructions as well as the correlation in technical terminology with relational grammar indicates how the S-structures of sentences containing ergative verbs are to be derived.

It is considered characteristic of ergative verbs that they do not assign the accusative Case to their D-structure direct objects, and that in sentences with ergative verbs – as in the passive – the subject position is not assigned a thematic role; that is, the subject position is a non-theta position.

The derivation of the S-Structure is exactly as in the passive. According to Case theory, a direct-object NP must abandon a position in which it receives no Case. Theta theory stipulates that such an object can only be moved to a non-theta subject position. The corresponding S-structure is as follows:

(4) $[_S \text{NP}_i [_{VP} \text{V } t_i]]$

Now Burzio shows that the "unaccusative" property of ergative verbs follows from a general hypothesis and therefore need not be stipulated as a lexical peculiarity of these verbs. This hypothesis, which need not be discussed further here, is known as

(5)   *Burzio's Generalization*
        The subject position has no theta-role iff the object position has
        no Case.

In view of this generalization, the ergative hypothesis can be formulated as follows. There is a certain class of intransitive verbs (the ergative verbs) which has exactly one of the properties mentioned in (5) *as a lexical peculiarity*.

If one assumes with Hoekstra (1984) that the selection of thematic properties is a lexical matter – since the assignment of thematic roles to grammatical functions is determined in the lexicon – then ergative verbs can be characterized by the following lexical property: in sentences in which ergative verbs occur, the subject position is not assigned a thematic role.

The Justification of the Ergative Hypothesis: Its Syntactic Predictions

2.1. *NE*-CLITICIZATION AND AUXILIARY SELECTION IN ITALIAN

It has already been mentioned that according to Burzio, the domain of ergative verbs encompasses more than the intransitive variants of the type introduced in Chapter 1 (1) and (2). How can this claim be put to the test? And how can we determine which intransitive verbs are to be considered ergative in Burzio's sense?

It is clear that the lexical peculiarity of ergative verbs makes syntactic predictions about the D-structural object nature of the surface-structure subject. Using phenomena specific to D-structural direct objects, one cannot only test the ergative hypothesis, but one can also determine which verbs are ergative in Burzio's understanding of the term.

In Italian, direct objects share a fairly clear characteristic property. Burzio points out that the cliticization of a partitive phrase by the particle *ne* is only possible for direct objects. Consider the following examples.

(1)   a.   Giovanni ha insultato due amici
            'John has insulted two friends'
      b.   Giovanni ne   ha insultati due
            John   of-them has insulted two
            'John has insulted two of them'

(2)   a.   Giovanni ha parlato a due amici
            'John has talked with two friends'
      b. *Giovanni ne   ha parlato a   due
            John   of-them has talked with two
            'John has talked with two of them'

In Italian, the subject can be freely inverted; that is, an Italian subject can be positioned in the underlying preverbal subject position or post-verbally.

For such inverted surface subjects we can observe that the subjects of transitive verbs do not allow *ne*-cliticization, but the subjects of verbs in passive form do:

(3)   a. *Ne   hanno fatto   domanda   molti
          of-them have   submitted an application many
          'Many of them have submitted an application'
       b. Ne   furono   arrestati molti
          of-them have been arrested many
          'Many of them have been arrested'

This indicates that the *D-structure position of the direct object* allows *ne*-cliticization, and that the passive subject in (3b) but not the inverted transitive subject in (3a) can occupy this position.

   Thus, Burzio assumes that the former is to be analyzed as *an NP within the VP* (generated there in the base) as in

(4)   [$_{VP}$ V NP]]

while the inversion in the latter case has to be represented as *adjunction* of the NP from its D-structure subject position to the VP as in

(5)   [$_S$ [$_{VP}$ [$_{VP}$ V] NP]]

In such an analysis, one must obviously clarify how the surface subject in question can be assigned nominative Case. This is an important question, particularly for the ergative case (4), for in the analysis of ergative constructions given in Chapter 1, *NP-movement* has been triggered in the absence of Case assignment to the object position.

   The question of how an "ergative subject" can receive nominative Case in the object position, and whether this is only possible in Italian or also in German will be discussed at length in Chapter 3.

   If one assumes that the clitic pronoun in examples such as (1) was moved from the position of the partitive phrase to the verb (with the corresponding consequences for agreement), cf.

(6)   a. [$_{VP}$ ha insultato [$_{NP}$ molti ne]]
       b. [$_{VP}$ [$_V$ ne$_i$ ha insultati] [$_{NP}$ molti t$_i$]]

then structures (4) and (5) suggest a reason why only direct objects permit *ne*-cliticization: apparently, the clitic must c-command its trace, a relation that obtains between *ne* and an NP in object position, but not between *ne* and an NP inverted into the adjunct position.

   As far as the ergative hypothesis is concerned, the crucial observation is that inverted subjects permit *ne*-cliticization *for certain intransitive verbs*, but not for others, cf.

(7) a. Arrivano molti studenti
    arrive many students
    'Many students arrive'
  b. Ne arrivano molti
    of-them arrive many
    'Many of them arrive'

(8) a. Lavorano molti studenti
    work many students
    'Many students work'
  b. *Ne lavorano molti
    of-them work many
    'Many of them work'

However, it must be noticed that even in the case of such intransitive verbs as, for example, *arrivare* (*to arrive*), whose *inverted* subjects permit cliticization, *ne*-cliticization is *not* possible when the subject takes the preverbal – i.e. underlying – subject position, cf.

(9) a. Molti studenti arrivano
    'Many students are arriving'
  b. *Molti ne arrivano
    'Many of them are arriving'

In view of these data, Burzio assumes that the postposed subject is in the object position in (7), and that it is inverted into the adjunct position in (8).

(10) a. $[_{VP}$ arrivano $[_{NP}$ molti studenti]]
  b. $[_{VP} [_{VP}$ lavorano] $[_{NP}$ molti studenti]]

So in (10a), the surface subject remains in its underlying object position. The fact that this option exists alongside option (9a) which is derived through NP-movement must be explained as an option of nominative Case assignment in Italian.

 Let us then say that *ne*-cliticization provides a test for ergative verbs in Italian: intransitive verbs whose inverted subjects allow this sort of cliticization are ergative.

 Before we come to the corresponding situation in German, let me point out a further criterion for ergative verbs in Italian: *auxiliary selection*. The ergative verbs form their present perfect tense with *essere* (*to be*), whereas the other intransitive and transitive verbs generally form it with *avere* (*to have*) (the exceptions are not relevant in this context), cf.

(11)   a.   Giovanni è arrivato
            John   is arrived
            'John has arrived'
       b.   Giovanni ha lavorato
            'John has worked'

This can also be seen from the intransitive/transitive variants mentioned in Chapter 1.

(12)   a.   La marina americana ha affondato la nave
            'The American navy has sunk the ship'
       b.   La nave è affondata
            the ship is sunk
            'The ship has sunk'

The present perfect of ergative verbs, as is also the case with the passive, makes use of *essere* as the auxiliary in Italian. This indicates that the choice of *essere* is related to the fact that in these cases only the object – not the subject – position receives a theta-role.

How the auxiliary selection is related to the dethematized argument in the passive (it can be picked up again by a *by*-phrase) and to the argument gap typical of ergative verbs (an agentive *by*-phrase is not possible) will be discussed in connection with the corresponding German phenomenon.

So far we have become acquainted with two tests for ergative verbs in Italian. One makes use of the *object position* (the NP within the VP) of the surface subject, the other refers to the argument structure typical of ergative verbs.

2.2. AUXILIARY SELECTION IN GERMAN

Are there ergative verbs in German? If so, it should be possible to analyze them in a way similar to those in Italian, and the analysis should be testable using syntactic predictions specific for German.

At first sight, it appears as though there is no consistent test in German comparable to the *ne*-cliticization test in Italian. And, in fact, the ergative hypothesis is somewhat more difficult to test in German. Nonetheless, there are a few reliable tests even in this language: let us begin by considering auxiliary selection.

In German, *transitive verbs* form their present perfect tense with *haben* (*to have*).

(13)   Jupp   hat den Ball getroffen
        Joseph has the ball kicked
        'Joseph has kicked the ball'

This is also true of *inherently reflexive verbs*. With respect to the latter, one must assume that the accusative reflexive pronoun *sich* does not really constitute an argument. Finally, it also holds true for the so-called *impersonal verbs*.

(14)   a.   Jupp hat sich geschämt
              'Joseph was ashamed'
        b.   Es hat gedonnert
              'It has thundered'

A few transitive verbs which form the present perfect active with *sein* (*to be*) do not readily fit into place, cf.

(15)   a.   Ich bin die Arbeit durchgegangen
              I   am the work   gone through
              'I have gone through the work'
        b.   Er ist den Bund fürs Leben eingegangen
              he is the bond for life   gone through
              'He took the marriage vows'
        c.   Er ist die ganze Stadt abgelaufen
              he is the whole town run through
              'He has run through the whole town'
        d.   Sie ist ihn   geflohen
              she is him$_{acc}$ fled
              'She has fled from him'
        e.   Sie ist ihn   angegangen
              she is him$_{acc}$ approached
              'She has approached him'

That these accusatives are really instances of direct objects (*fliehen* (*to flee*) is an exception) is shown by the fact that they can undergo passivization.
    With *intransitive verbs* the case is less uniform. There is a class of intransitive verbs which generally forms the present perfect active with *haben* (*to have*). For example:

(16)   a.   one place: *arbeiten* (*to work*), *schlafen* (*to sleep*), *blühen* (*to bloom*)
        b.   with indirect object: *zustimmen* (*to agree*), *zuhören* (*to listen to*), *helfen* (*to help*)

There is, however, another class of intransitive verbs which generally forms its present perfect tense with *sein* (to be). For example:

(17)   a.   one place: *ankommen (to arrive), verblühen (to wither), wachsen (to grow), fallen (to fall), ertrinken (to drown), ersticken (to suffocate), entstehen (to come into existence/arise/result)*

          b.   with indirect object: *unterliegen (to succumb), unterlaufen (to happen, in the sense of a mistake), auffallen (to strike a p.), gelingen (to succeed), passieren (to happen), zustoßen (to befall s.o./to happen to s.o.), einfallen (to occur to a p.)*

Let us ignore the few exceptions to the transitive rule for the moment and concentrate on the intransitive verbs. Here we would seem to find a situation similar to that in Italian. Moreover, it should be noticed that in German, the present perfect passive is also generally formed with *sein*.

In traditional German grammars, one finds generalizations of the following type. The present perfect tense of the *perfective* intransitive verbs (those giving a result) is formed with *sein*; that of the *imperfective* intransitive verbs is formed with *haben* (Paul (1920), Vol. IV, paragraph 359). However, Hermann Paul himself points out that this regularity is "darkened and distorted" in the course of developing analytical verb forms. He further notes that certain verbs, such as

(18)   Er ist gelegen/geschwommen vs. Er hat gelegen/geschwommen
        he is lain/swum   vs. he has lain/swum

cannot be clearly classified, and that (in this respect) regional differences between Northern and Southern Germany can be observed.

According to Duden (1973), intransitive verbs signifying *a change of state or place* and thus a "newly arrived-at state" form the perfect tense with *sein*, while intransitive verbs signifying an *uncompleted event* or a *continuing event* select *haben*. Both of these aspects can affect one and the same verb differently, depending on whether directionality or locality is expressed. Some of the verbs of motion show this effect. For example:

(19)   a.   Hans *hat* in seinem Zimmer getanzt
              John *has* in his   room$_{dat}$ danced
              'John *has* danced in his room'

          b.   Hans *ist* in sein Zimmer getanzt
              John *is* into his room$_{acc}$ danced
              'John has danced into his room'

Imperfective verbs of motion, such as *gehen* (*to walk, to go*), *laufen* (*to run*), and *rennen* (*to race*), are exceptions to this generalization. These verbs, as well as the verbs *sein* and *bleiben* (*to stay* or *to remain*), which are clearly stative verbs – that is, verbs signifying an enduring state – form the present perfect tense with *sein*.

The same is true, incidentally, for the Italian pendants *essere* and *rimanere* which also select *essere* in the present perfect tense, while the French *être* forms its perfect tense with *avoir* and not with *être*. This shows that the semantic diagnosis of traditional grammar obviously covers only a secondary aspect of auxiliary selection. Let us assume – despite all obvious confusion – that German verbs exhibiting *sein* selection are, as in Italian, ergative verbs.

This assumption gets us into trouble with the verbs introduced in (15), for these are transitive verbs that form the present perfect tense with *sein*. And verbs taking an accusative object cannot be classified as ergative under the analysis given above. (Later on, I will discuss suggestions such as the one by Belletti (1988) according to which ergative verbs assign partitive Case, the accusatives in question therefore being "actually" partitives).

One could parry the difficulty posed by (15) historically. Almost all of the verbs listed above were intransitive verbs which have become transitive by the addition of a prefix. (*Fliehen* is an exception, but this was the only case in which the accusative object could not be passivized, thus raising doubts as to whether the verb is "really" transitive.) In general, a change from *sein* to *haben* selection is associated with such cases. The problematic verbs could then be described as cases in which the analogy to the intransitive verbs is so strong that *sein* selection remains in effect. One could also counter the difficulties differently. Toman (1986), for instance, relates the accusative marking in such cases to the appearance of a separable prefix.

The first solution seems to lead immediately to a second difficulty. The intransitive verbs selecting *sein* – from which the compound verbs are derived – belong to precisely that group of verbs which, according to the generalizations of traditional grammar, present an exception to the usual *sein/haben* distribution. Even in recent analyses (cf. Wunderlich (1985)), in which the thematic role of the subject is held responsible for auxiliary selection, these verbs are an exception to the hypothesized regularity according to which intransitive verbs with an agent-subject select *haben*.

Should one say, then, that intransitive verbs of motion are also ergative? One point which could be made against this hypothesis is the fact that many of these verbs (like *tanzen* (*to dance*), *laufen* (*to run*) and *schwimmen* (*to swim*)) permit *haben* as well as *sein* selection (cf. (19)). Should one follow Wunderlich (1985) in seeking the solution in a relationship between "Aktionsarten" (action types) and thematic roles? Such a relationship

might, for instance, be of the following kind: resultativity (terminativity) involves factors that cannot be influenced by an agent (that is, the absence of an agent), while the presence of an agent implies the continuity of influenced processes (that is, nonterminativity). Unfortunately, this hypothesis fails to explain the relationship between thematic roles and "Aktionsarten" as well as that between thematic roles and auxiliary selection.

   The following observation seems to me to point to a solution: there is a use of the past participles of imperfective verbs of motion with the verb *kommen* which was already common in Middle High German, cf.

(20)   Er kommt gegangen/gelaufen/gerannt/gesprungen/geflogen/ge-
       fahren etc.
       he comes gone (going)/walked (walking)/run (running)/leaped
       (leaping)/flown (flying)/driven (driving) etc.

This construction expresses directionality *per se*. When verbs select *haben* with locality and *sein* with directionality, the use of the *kommen* form is only permitted with the *sein* variants.

(21)   a.   Er hat im   Zimmer getanzt
            he has in the room   danced
       b. *Er kommt im   Zimmer getanzt
            he comes in the room   danced

(22)   a.   Er ist ins   Zimmer getanzt
            he is into the room   danced
       b.   Er kommt ins   Zimmer getanzt
            he comes into the room   danced
            'He comes dancing into the room'

Hermann Paul points out ((1920), Vol. IV, paragraph 323) that with respect to these constructions, the use of such participles in the active voice "contradicts everything that we otherwise know". His only explanation is that these participles must be understood *"passively"*.

   If it is correct that the directional reading of these participles has a passive character, then the preference for *sein* in these cases can be explained by the usual selection of *sein* in the passive. The historically younger *haben* variant can be interpreted as an adaptation to the situation we usually find with imperfective intransitives. That some of these verbs *only* exhibit *sein* selection – even for the local reading – might be due either to the fact that a directional aspect can be recognized here, or to the uniformity of the paradigm.