Main claims
- German copula constructions show hierarchy effects similar to: PCC effects (e.g. Romance, Basque), inverse constructions (e.g. Algonquian), Agent Focus (e.g. Mayan), and dat–nom patterns (e.g. Icelandic).
- What these have in common: multiple accessible NPs in the domain of a single agreement probe (see e.g. Béjar & Rezac 2003; Anagnostopoulou 2005; Adger & Harbour 2007; Nevins 2007, Preminger 2014).
- What if there are commonalities? Possible PCC in German copulas: Place of Agreement (Béjar & Rezac 2009).
- Hypotheses tested in our experiment:
  - ‘3 > Participant, *Participant > 3’
  - ‘SG > PL, *PL > SG’
- No parallel restriction in English.

A Hierarchy Effect in German

Why German? Why copulas?
- In German copulas, both NPs are nominative (default case) and accessible to Agree (see Heycock 2012).
- In English, the predicate NP is inaccessible to agreement because it is accusative (see Bobaljik 2008).

An alternative
- Heycock (2012): The copula agrees with the more marked NP through inversion if it’s the predicate: (5) Das bist Du. (6) *Das ist Du. that are you that is you.
- Our account: True 3>|2 is inefiable in German (6); (5) is 2>|3 with a topicalized predicate: (7) Das bist [ du bist das ]
- Heycock: “Assumed identity sentences” like (3,4) are semantically asymmetric. Her Claim: Inversion is impossible here; (3b,4b) should be fine.
- Our claim: Agreement is always with non-predicate Hierarchy violations are bad. (3b,4b) should be out. (contra inversion as in Heycock 2012 & refs. there).

Experiment: Design

Sentence rating experiment: English (23 participants) and German (15 participants).
- 6-point Likert scale (1 – completely unacceptable, 6 – completely acceptable).

Design: manipulated person and number of both NPs in copula constructions

Stimuli: Background story on role-playing game; each individual trial consisted of rating one assignment:
(8) (pointing at you, then at your friend John) You are him.
- Control condition: verb agreement inconsistent with either argument (*You am him, *Du bin er).

Experiment: Results

A Hierarchical Effect in German

Person hierarchy effects:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>English</th>
<th>German</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rating</td>
<td>3&gt;Part</td>
<td>Part=3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>4.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>4.1</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Number hierarchy effects:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>English</th>
<th>German</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rating</td>
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<tr>
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<td>2</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Analysis: Cumulative link mixed model with Language, as well as Person hierarchy, Number hierarchy and their interaction with Language as fixed effects, and random intercept and slopes by participant (including interactions).
- Crosslanguage differences:
  - significant interaction between Language and ‘Part > 3’–‘3 > Part’ comparison (z = 2.4)
  - significant interaction between Language and ‘SG > PL’–‘PL > SG’ comparison (z = 4.2)

Number in PCC vs Copulas

Puzzle: There are no “Number Case Constraint” effects in double-object constructions (Nevins 2011) — but we find a number effect in German copulas.

Proposal:
- Person and number are separate probes (e.g. Béjar & Rezac 2003)
- *# universally higher than # (Preminger 2011)
- Clinic double renders an NP invisible to agreement, removing the IO as an intervener (Anagnostopoulou 2003, Preminger 2009) — but not in German copulas.

Ditransitive PCC:

| Lp | # | [πp|ApplP|NP|G] | [lp|NP|G] |
|----|---|----------------|-------|
|    | # | clinic-double  |       |

German copulas:

| Lp | # | [πp|ApplP|NP|G] | [lp|NP|G] |
|----|---|----------------|-------|
|    | # | clinic-double  |       |

Acknowledgments

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