The German Dative of Inaction

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Abstract: A German applicative argument interpreted as a Dative of Inaction (DI) seems to denote an indirect, unintentional causer. However, I argue that no such causative event is actually present in the derivation of the DI structure by comparing the behavior of clearly causative sentences and DI sentences. I provide a mono-eventive analysis of the DI building on Pylkkänen's (2002) high applicative template. Furthermore, I show that the fact that DIs can only occur with certain unaccusative verbs follows from a selectional requirement that prevents agentive Voice to merge with the DI projection.

1.   Introduction

In this paper, I provide an analysis for the German Dative of Inaction (DI).[1] An example is given in (1); the Dative of Inaction is underlined.

(1)   <u>Der   Oma</u>   zerbrach die   Vase.
             the.DAT   grandma broke   the.NOM vase
             'The vase broke on grandma.'
             (= Hens 1997:192, ex. 2)

In this sentence, the referent of the dative constituent is understood as failing to prevent the event of the vase breaking from happening. In other words, the grandma did not (intentionally) break the vase but she also did not act in such a way that the breaking was prevented. It is in that sense that she is responsible for the broken vase. Note that the translation provided by Hens is slightly misleading because *on* here is not to be understood as "affecting (positively or negatively)." A more adequate translation would be "Grandma let the vase break" (see Rosengren 1975 for possible issues with this translation due to the available modal interpretations of *let*) or "The vase broke on grandma's watch." I will use this latter translation for original examples or examples without a provided translation.

The German DI construction is remarkable, first, because of its rather complex interpretation (*the referent failed to prevent an event from happening*), especially since German has several other interpretations available for dative constituents (cf. Bosse 2011 and Hole 2008, among

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[1] This name is taken from Hens (1997). In other languages, similar constructions have been discussed under the label *unintentional causer* (see also Schäfer 2008 and references cited therein).

many others). Second, as shown below, the distribution of the DI is very limited, namely to certain unaccusative verbs (also see Schäfer 2008).[2]

This paper is organized as follows: I first discuss the major features of the Dative of Inaction in section 2. Following that I address the question on whether the DI involves causation. I conclude that it does not, in part by comparing its behavior to the clearly causative behavior of the Japanese adversity causative. I provide an analysis of the German DI in section 4. Then, I discuss some consequences of the analysis as well as a few open questions before concluding the paper in section 6.

2.   Features

There are three major features of the DI that need to be accounted for: its status as an applicative argument, its meaning, and its distribution. In this section, I describe each of these features in detail.

The DI is an applicative ("free") dative, i.e. the dative constituent is not selected by the verb but is seemingly freely added to the sentence. Using the omission test on example (1) shows that the dative constituent is not obligatory (cf. Hole 2008 for the omission test) because the sentence is grammatical without the dative constituent.

(2)   Die   Vase zerbrach.
             the.NOM vase   broke
             'The vase broke.'

Sentence (2) is grammatical and does not implicate that there was someone who was supposed to prevent the event from happening. Consequently, the dative constituent in (1) can be characterized as an applicative argument because its presence is not required by the verb (or a preposition). This, in combination with the fact that its meaning is not semantically implied, indicates that it is a true applicative argument.

A second feature of the DI is that it can only occur with non-agentive (unaccusative) verbs that are resultative or bounded (Hens 1997, Rosengren 1975, Hole 2008), alternatively known as "unmarked anticausative verbs" (Schäfer 2008). This characterizes the verb *zerbrechen* 'break' in (1). In example (3), a transitive verb is used, and the DI interpretation is not available; only the affected experiencer interpretation of the applicative dative is possible (see Bosse 2011 and Bosse et al. forthcoming).

(3)   [#] Alex   zerbrach mir   Bens   Vase.
             Alex.NOM   broke   me.DAT Ben's   vase
             'Alex broke Ben's vase on/affecting me.' (affected experiencer)
             not available: *'Alex broke Ben's vase on my watch.'*

If an agentive (unergative) verb is used, the DI is also not licensed:

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[2] Many of the observations discussed in this paper are similar or identical to those reported in Schäfer (2008) but were made independently.

(4)   * Das   Kind hat   mir   gespielt.
                the.NOM child has   me.DAT   played
                intended: *'The child played on my watch.'*

A non-resultative unaccusative verb does not license a DI either:

(5)   * Der   Hund   hat   mir   existiert.
                the.NOM dog   has   me.DAT   existed
                'The dog existed on my watch.'

If an unaccusative verb denotes a non-agentive, resultative event that cannot be prevented, the DI is ruled out as well:

(6)   * Der   Ton verklang   mir.
                the.NOM tone   faded.away   me.DAT
                'The tone (of music) faded away on my watch.'
                (= Rosengren 1975:214, ex. 11; my translation)

In this example, the event of fading away is non-agentive and resultative but, under normal circumstances, it is impossible to prevent a tone from fading away. Due to this, the DI is not licensed. The sentence is acceptable however if one considers a dream or a situation in which it is possible to prevent the fading away of tones.

       This observation about the event needing to be preventable also shows that the dative referent must be able to act (so (s)he could prevent the event). If the dative constituent denotes an entity that cannot act volitionally, the DI is not acceptable (cf. Hole's "percipience requirement" 2008; also see Schäfer 2008).

(7)   * Der   Baum   ist   der   Sonne/Erde   verrottet.
                the.NOM tree   is   the.DAT sun/soil   rotten
                'The tree rotted on the sun's/ soil's watch.'

This sentence, too, is acceptable if the sun/soil acted volitionally as, for instance, in a children's story.

       In short, the Dative of Inaction is highly restricted in its occurrence: It can only occur in certain unaccusative sentences (for passives, see below). The limited distribution of this applicative dative as well as its "failure to prevent"-meaning and applicative status need to be accounted for.

       In addition, there is a question whether the DI construction involves causation: Rosengren (1975:214) mentions "eine Art von kausaler Beziehung zwischen dem Dativ und der Aussage im übrigen" ('a kind of causal relation between the dative and the (remaining) proposition') as part of the meaning of the DI. In contrast, Hens (1997) states that the DI involves no causative meaning. Also the brief discussion about how to properly translate and/or paraphrase DI constructions (section 1) hints at this issue as, for instance, using *let* might point to an indirect or unintentional causer. But does the DI construction really involve causation?

3.   Causation

In this section, I address the question of whether the analysis of the German DI should include a causative event and/or a(n indirect/unintentional) causer. As mentioned in the previous paragraph, researchers have had differing opinions on that question (also see Schäfer 2008), and paraphrases and translation of the DI structure often rely on *let* (or its equivalence) which can be used to mark indirect causation (see section 1).

Before addressing the German DI, I discuss the behavior of the Japanese adversity causative; a construction whose causative analysis is hardly disputed, partly due to the overt causative morpheme (see Pylkkänen 2002 and Harley 2008). The Japanese adversity causative is exemplified in (8).

(8)   Taroo-ga   musuko-o   sin-ase-ta.
            Taro-NOM   son-ACC   die-CAUSE-PAST
            'Taro's son died on him.'
            (= Pylkkänen 2002:81 ex. 155)

In this example, the Japanese causative morpheme *-sase-* can indicate indirect causation by the referent of the nominative-marked constituent: *Taro let his son die* (Harley 2008). In this interpretation as well as the fact that the verb itself does not select for the indirect causer, the Japanese adversity causative is similar to the German DI.

Pylkkänen (2002) and Harley (2008) agree that the Japanese adversity causative construction is bi-eventive: It involves a causative event in addition to the verbal event. Pylkkänen shows that it is possible to state the causing event overtly in Japanese, while it is not possible to state an agent (9); that fact is taken to show that there is indeed a causative event (and not any other agentive event) present.
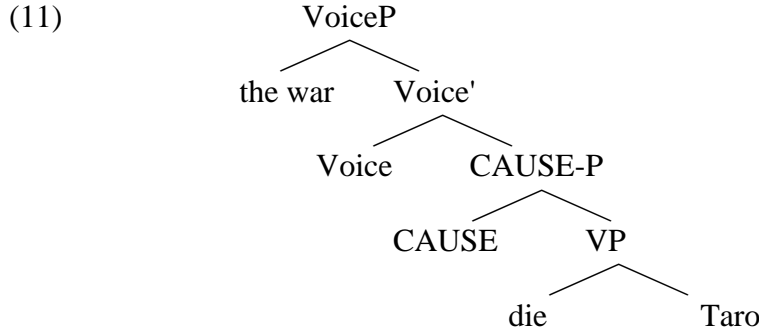
(9)   a.   Taroo-ga   senseoo-ni-yotte musuko-o   sin-ase-ta.
             Taroo-NOM   war-by   son-ACC   die-CAUSE-PAST
             'Taro's son was caused to die on him by the war.'
       b. * Taroo-ga   Hanako-ni-yotte   musuko-o   sin-ase-ta.
             Taroo-NOM   Hanako-by   son-ACC   die-CAUSE-PAST
             'Taro's son was caused to die on him by Hanako.'
             (= Pylkkänen 2002:82-83 exx. 158a, 161)

Consequently, Pylkkänen provides the following analysis for the Japanese adversity causative. The causative event is introduced by a CAUSE head which attaches above the VP and below Voice. The denotation of the CAUSE head is given in (10). It introduces the causing event and establishes that the causing event causes the verbal event. Voice can then introduce the causing event as shown in the sample derivation in (11).[3]

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[3] Note that this example provided by Pylkkänen (2002) does not include the applicative indirect causer of (9).

(10) $\quad\quad\quad$ ⟦CAUSE⟧: $\lambda f_{<s,t>}$. λe. ($\exists e'$) [$f(e')$ & CAUSE(e,e')]

(11)

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                    VoiceP
                   /      \
              the war    Voice'
                        /     \
                    Voice    CAUSE-P
                            /       \
                        CAUSE        VP
                                    /   \
                                  die    Taro
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$\quad\quad\quad\quad$ ⟦VP⟧ = λe. Dying(e) & Theme(e,Taro)
$\quad\quad\quad\quad$ ⟦CAUSE⟧ = $\lambda f_{<s,t>}$. λe. ($\exists e'$)[$f(e')$ & CAUSE(e,e')]
$\quad\quad\quad\quad$ ⟦CAUSE-P⟧ = λe. ($\exists e'$)[Dying(e') & Theme(e',Taro) & CAUSE(e,e')]
$\quad\quad\quad\quad$ ⟦Voice⟧ = λx. λe. $e=x$
$\quad\quad\quad\quad$ ⟦Voice'⟧ = λx. λe. ($\exists e'$)[Dying(e') & Theme(e',Taro) & CAUSE(e,e') & $e = x$]
$\quad\quad\quad\quad$ ⟦VoiceP⟧ = λe. ($\exists e'$)[Dying(e') & Theme(e',Taro) & CAUSE(e,e') & e = the war]
$\quad\quad\quad\quad$ (= Pylkkänen 2002:85 ex. 165)

The denotation of VoiceP states that there is an event of (the) war which causes another event which is a dying event and Taro is the theme of this dying event.

$\quad\quad$ Harley (2008) provides further support for this bi-eventive analysis of the Japanese adversity causative. She states that VP-adverbs can modify the caused event (verbal event) as well as the causing event. Furthermore, two separate verbal events can be conjoined by using *-ka* 'or' underneath a single causing event. Thus, the Japanese adversity causative has several bi-eventive properties.

$\quad\quad$ Since Pylkkänen's analysis involves a causing event which is existentially quantified, this event should not be able to be the target of negation (cf. Bosse et al. forthcoming). Consider the following two English examples:

(12) $\quad$ a. $\quad$ John melted the ice.
$\quad\quad\quad$ b. $\quad$ John didn't melt the ice.

Sentence (12a) is typically analyzed as a causative sentence, paraphrased as *John acted in such a way that the ice melted*, with the denotation given in (13).

(13) $\quad\quad\quad$ ⟦(12a)⟧ = λe. DO(e) & Agt(e, John) & $\exists e'$ MELT(e') & Pat(e', ice cream)
$\quad\quad\quad\quad$ & CAUSE(e, e')

The negation of this causative sentence (12b) can only be used to negate the existence of the causing event (*John did not act in such a way that the ice melted*). Crucially, sentence (12b) cannot mean that John acted in such a way that the ice did not melt. In other words, the melting

event cannot be the target of sentential negation, i.e. the existentially quantified event cannot be negated in a causative construction.

Unfortunately, this test cannot easily be applied to the Japanese adversity causative because the negation of this structure is judged as very strange.[4] However, I will use this observation about English along with the bi-eventive behaviors displayed by the Japanese adversity causatives to discuss causation with respect to the German DI. Below I show that, as Hens (1997) states, the German DI does not involve causation.

First, if there are two events, namely a caused and a causing event, a VP-adverb should be able to modify either event (as Harley 2008 stated for Japanese adversity causatives). However, in the German DI construction an adverb does not lead to ambiguity. It can only modify the verbal event, as expected if that is the only event.

(14)   Der   Oma   verrottete   der   Baum   schnell.
the.DAT   grandma rotted   the.NOM tree   fast
'The tree rotted fast on (the) grandma's watch.'
not available: *'Fast, the grandma let the tree rot.'*

Second, unlike Harley (2008) claimed for Japanese, there is no causation scoping over conjoined events. The responsibility of preventing the event from happening is only associated with one of the conjoined events, as shown in sentence (15).

(15)   Der   Baum   verrottete   der   Oma   und   die   Vase   zerbrach.
the.NOM tree   rotted   the.DAT grandma and   the.NOM vase   broke
'The tree rotted on (the) grandma's watch and the vase broke (not on her watch).'

Third, sentential negation can target all aspects of the event. There is no caused event in the DI construction that cannot be targeted (cf. the discussion of (12)).

(16)   Der   Oma   verrottete   der   Baum   nicht.
the.DAT grandma rotted   the.NOM tree   NEG
'The tree didn't rot on (the) grandma's watch.'

This sentence can mean that the tree rotted but it did not happen while grandma was in charge of the tree or that the tree did not rot. The sentential negation can pick out all elements in the denotation.

Finally, it is not possible to introduce an overt causing event to a sentence with a DI using *wegen* 'because of' or *von* 'by:'

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[4] Thanks to Satoshi Tomioka for this judgment.

(17) a. [?]* Der   Oma   verrottete   der   Baum   wegen   der   Hitze.
             the.DAT   grandma   rotted   the.NOM   tree   because.of   the   heat
             not available: *'The tree rotted on grandma's watch because of the heat.'*
             marginal: *'The tree rotted because of the heat on/affecting (the) grandma.'*

      b. * Der   Oma   verrottete   der   Baum   von   der   Hitze.
             the.DAT   grandma   rotted   the.NOM   tree   by   the   heat
             intended: *'The tree rotted by the heat on grandma's watch watch.'*

As Schäfer (2008) points out it is possible to state a causing event using the preposition *durch* 'due to.' However, as he discusses, introducing causative events seems to be one function of that preposition and is not specific to DI (or causative) constructions. The phrase *auf Grund (von)* 'due to' seems to behave similarly. Thus, it is not clear that the examples in (18) are similar to the Japanese ones in (9).

(18) a.   Durch   die   Hitze verrottete   der   Oma   der   Baum.
             through   the.ACC   heat   rotted   the.DAT   grandma   the.NOM   tree
             'Due to the heat, the tree rotted on grandma's watch.'

      b.   Auf   Grund   der   Hitze   verrottete   der   Oma   der   Baum.
             on   ground   the.GEN   heat   rotted   the.DAT   grandma   the.NOM   tree
             'Due to the heat, the tree rotted on grandma's watch.'

These four facts about the German DI construction point to the conclusion that it is a mono-eventive construction. There is no evidence for a second, causative event with the referent of the DI being the (indirect or unintentional) causer of said causative event. Based on the discussion in this section, I contend that the analysis of the German DI does not require the inclusion of a causative event (in addition to the verbal event). I provide an analysis of the mono-eventive DI in the following section.

4. Analysis

I propose an analysis for the German DI in which the DI is a high applicative argument, following Pylkkänen's (2002) classification of applicative arguments. These high applicative arguments attach above VP and below Voice, and they do not denote a transfer of possession. This semantic characterization fits the DI (see section 1); the syntactic characterization of a high applicative argument is ideal for the DI, as argued for below.
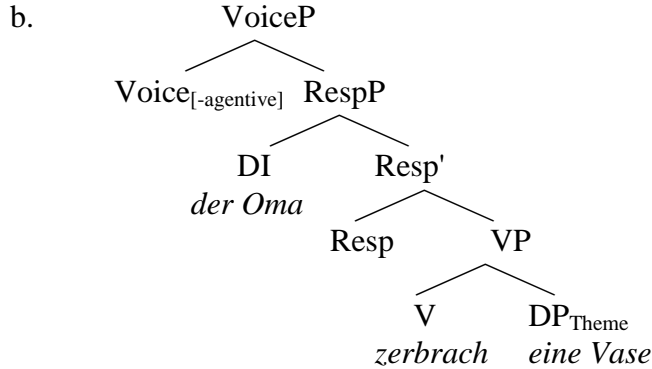
      I propose that there is a phonologically null head *Resp(onsible)* which attaches between VP and Voice. The DI is merged in the specifier position of this head. Semantically, the Resp head introduces that its argument is responsible for the verbal event. No second event is introduced. The Resp head and VP combine by event identification (Kratzer 1996). The exact semantic denotation of this head is given in (19) and a full derivation (below tense) is shown in (20).[5]

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[5] German is standardly analyzed as being verb-final. This has no effect on my analysis.

(19) a. ⟦Resp⟧ = λx. λe. Responsible(e, x)
      b. That the individual x is responsible for event e is true iff it is possible that x could
          have acted to prevent the event from happening (in case the event happened).

(20) a. Der   Oma   zerbrach   eine   Vase.
          the.DAT grandma   broke   a.NOM   vase
          'The vase broke on grandma.'
          (= Hens 1997:192, ex. 2)

      b.   VoiceP
                         /   \
             Voice[-agentive]   RespP
                                /   \
                             DI   Resp'
                           der Oma   /   \
                                    Resp   VP
                                           /   \
                                          V   DP_Theme
                                      zerbrach *eine Vase*

      c. ⟦VP⟧ = λe. BREAK(e) & Thm(e, the vase)
          ⟦Resp⟧ = λx. λe. Responsible(e, x)
          ⟦Resp'⟧ = λx. λe. BREAK(e) & Thm(e, the vase) & Responsible(e, x)
          ⟦RespP⟧ = λe. BREAK(e) & Thm(e, the vase) & Responsible(e, grandma)
          (Resp and VP combine by event identification.)

Thus, VoiceP denotes a breaking event of the vase for which the grandma is responsible (in that
she did not act to prevent it). There is no second event or a causer. In other words, my analysis of
the German DI is that it is a high applicative argument and that it contributes only another parti-
cipant for the event denoted by the verb.

    In the following section, I show how my analysis is suited to account for the features of
the DI presented above.

5.   Consequences
As discussed in sections 2 and 3, the main features of the DI that its analysis need to account for
are its status as an applicative argument, its meaning, and its limited distribution. In this section,
I show how my analysis accounts for these features. Furthermore, I address some further predic-
tions of my analysis as well as a few open questions.

5.1.   Core Features and Predictions
The first feature of the DI that my analysis addresses is the DI's status as an applicative (non-se-
lected) argument. This is represented in my analysis by the optional Resp head which merges be-
tween VP and Voice. According to Pylkkänen (2002), high applicative arguments can generally
occur with unergative and static verbs. This is not true for the DI: It is restricted to boun-
ded/resultative verbs that are non-agentive ("unmarked anticausatives", see section 2). This re-

quirement is reflected in my analysis by a selectional requirement that allows only non-agentive Voice (Voice$_{[-agentive]}$) to select RespP. Agentive Voice cannot select RespP. Consequently, all transitive and unergative verbs cannot license the DI despite it being a type of high applicative argument.

The analysis of passive sentences proposed by Bruening (2012) further shows that DIs require non-agentive Voice. He argues that passive sentences have an agentive Voice head which ensures that the agent is present semantically. The realization of the agent is then suppressed syntactically. Following this analysis for passives, my analysis of the DI predicts that passive sentences should not license a DI because there is an agentive Voice head. This prediction is in fact borne out: The dative constituent in (21) cannot be interpreted as a DI.

(21)   Der   Oma   wurde   die   Vase zerbrochen.
         the.DAT grandma became   the.NOM vase   broken
         'The vase was broken on/for grandma.'
         not available: *'The vase was broken on grandma's watch.'*

If only non-agentive Voice can select RespP, then this limits the distribution of the DI drastically because most active sentences (transitive, unergative) require an agentive Voice head as do passive sentences (according to Bruening). The selectional requirement on Voice therefore also explains the limited distribution of the DI – the second feature of the DI that needed to be explained (besides its meaning and its status as an applicative argument).

The last major feature, the meaning of the DI, is explained by the phonologically null Resp head. It carries the meaning of someone failing to prevent an event, and it introduces the needed individual into the derivation (in its specifier). The meaning of "responsible" is defined in such a way that the referent of the DI must be able to act, yet does not cause the event to come about. This is in accordance with the observations presented in section 3 that there is no causative event present in the DI construction.

My analysis makes another prediction, namely one regarding the interpretation of *wieder* 'again' in sentences with DIs. Beck and Johnson (2004) show that *again* picks out nodes of type <s,t> in the tree; i.e. *again* can attach to nodes of this type and indicate that only the event lower in the structure is repeated. In the tree in (20), there are two nodes of type <s,t>, namely VP and RespP.[6] This predicts that two readings should be possible when the DI co-occurs with *again*:

(22)   a.   VP repetition: The event happened before with someone else or no one in charge.
         b.   RespP repetition: The event happened before with the same person in charge.

These predictions are in fact borne out. Sentence (23) includes a DI and *wieder* 'again.' The sentence can mean that the ice was melted before and then it melted again while the salesman was in charge (VP attachment), or that the ice melted twice while the salesman was in charge of it both times (RespP attachment).

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[6] VoiceP with non-agentive Voice is likely to be of type <s,t> as well but since Voice$_{[-agentive]}$ does not introduce a new event participant, the reading obtained by attaching *again* will be indistinguishable from *again* attaching to RespP.

(23)   Dem   Verkäufer ist das   Eis   wieder geschmolzen.
              the.DAT salesman   is the.NOM ice   again   melted
              'The ice melted again on the salesman's watch.'

Furthermore, it is not possible to use *again* to indicate that the person in charge was responsible for two different events. In other words, there is no causative event that *again* can modify with the exclusion of the verbal event. This is shown in sentence (24). The sentence can only mean that the ice had melted on the salesman's watch previously and now did so again. Crucially, the sentence cannot mean that *again* refers to two different events (namely, the flower rotting and the ice melting) linked by the same causer.

(24)   # Dem Verkäufer ist eine   Blume   verrottet und dann ist   ihm
              the.Dat   salesman is a.NOM   flower   rotted   and then is   him.DAT
              wieder   das   Eis   geschmolzen
              again   the.NOM ice   melted
              'A flower rotted on the salesman's watch and again on his watch the ice melted.'

Another prediction by my analysis that is borne out concerns an observation made by Hens (1997). He argues that the DI always has an adversity interpretation. This can be seen from sentences like (25): In this sentence, a positive adverb scopes over the whole sentence (including the DI) and cannot alter the meaning that there was a failure (namely to prevent the event) on part of the grandma.

(25)   Zum Glück   ist   der   Oma   die   Suppe   verbrannt.
              for.the luck   is   the.DAT grandma the.NOM soup   burned
              'Fortunately, the soup burned on grandma.'
              (= Hens 1997: ex. 25b)

This sentence can only mean that the grandma failed to prevent the soup from burning and that this unfortunate event turned out to be advantageous or fortunate in some way; it was a blessing in disguise. Crucially, the sentence cannot mean that the burning of the soup by itself is considered a positive or intended event. Thus, unlike the German affected experiencer which can be understood as having an adversity or a beneficial interpretation depending on the context (Bosse 2011, Bosse et al. forthcoming), the DI cannot "adjust" its meaning pragmatically; the "failure to prevent an event"-meaning prevails. This is reflected in my analysis in the denotation of the Resp head. Since the "failure to prevent an event"-meaning is the core meaning, this meaning cannot be changed pragmatically. This also accounts for the oddity of the two following examples provided by Hens:[7]

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[7] Hens marks each with an asterisk but explains in the text that they are semantically and/or pragmatically odd on a DI reading. The sentences are grammatical as affected experiencers. Consequently, I changed the judgment markings.

(26) a. [#] Dem   Gärtner ist das   Unkraut   verwelkt.
           the.DAT gardener is the.NOM weeds   withered
           'The weeds withered on the gardener.'

      b. [#] Beim Backen ist mir   der   Teig pünktlich   aufgegangen.
           at.the baking is me.DAT the.NOM dough on.time   risen
           'When I was baking, the dough rose on me on time.'
           (= Hens 1997:202-203, exx. 22, 23)

Both sentences in (26) are semantically and/or pragmatically odd. Sentence (26a) is odd due to the fact that the withering of weeds is generally perceived to be a positive event. The DI denotes that the gardener failed at preventing the withering. This yields the pragmatically odd interpretation (in a typically situation) that it would have been better if the gardener had acted in a way that kept the weeds alive. Similarly in sentence (26)), the failure to prevent a usually desirable outcome (of the dough rising on time) causes the semantic/pragmatic oddity of the sentence stating that it would have been preferable if the referent of the DI had acted to prevent it.

    In short, my analysis cannot only account for the three major features of DIs but also makes the correct predictions for *again*-modification and high, positive adverbs. Yet, there are some unresolved issues concerning my analysis of the German DI. These are addressed in the following subsection.

5.2. Remaining Issues
The first issue that my analysis cannot fully account for is Rosengren's (1975) observation that not all events that the DI seems to occur with are undesirable events. The verb *gedeihen* 'flourish, blossom' can license a dative that is seemingly identical to the DI except the failure to act results in a (typically) desirable outcome; Rosengren therefore provides an analysis for sentences with this verb that is separate from the analysis of the DI.[8]

(27)   Die   Blumen gediehen   dem   Gärtner.
           the.NOM flowers   blossomed   the.DAT gardener
           'The flowers blossomed on the gardener's watch.'
           (= Rosengren 1975:219 ex. 29; my translation)

Sentence (27) can be understood as the flowers blooming while the gardener was in charge of them.[9] The gardener did not act to prevent the blooming. However, the salient reading is much stronger, namely not only did the gardener not prevent the blooming but (s)he acted so the flowers would bloom. In this, *gedeihen* differs from the other verbs that license DIs (discussed above): They do not have this strong reading that the referent of the DI may have acted to bring the event about. My analysis cannot cover this salient, strong reading of the sentence but only includes the weak reading that the gardener did not prevent the blooming.

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[8] As Rosengren points out *gelingen* 'succeed' might also fall into this category; the judgments I elicited regarding this verb are inconclusive at this point.
[9] The sentence is ambiguous with an affected experiencer interpretation.

The second remaining issue is that my analysis cannot easily be adapted to other languages. As Schäfer (2008) discusses in detail, the German DI is unusually restricted in its occurrence when compared to other languages. In many languages, among them Spanish, Bulgarian and Greek, the unintentional causer/DI can occur with marked anticausative verbs. These are verbs which are morphologically marked as being anticausative, unlike the unmarked anticausative verbs discussed above. One strategy to morphologically mark anticausative verbs is by using reflexive pronouns. An example of a marked Spanish anticausative with a DI is given below.

(28)   A Juan   se   le   rompieron las   gafas.
              to Juan.DAT   REFL he.DAT broke.3.PL the   glasses
              'John unintentionally broke the glasses.'
              (= Schäfer 2008:69, ex. 67a)

The corresponding German structure (marked anticausative with a DI) is ungrammatical:[10]

(29)   * Der   Maria   öffnete sich die   Tür.
             the.DAT Mary   opened REFL the   door
              'Mary unintentionally caused the door to open.'
              (= Schäfer 2008:45, ex. 13a)

Due to the fixed position of the Resp head in my analysis (between Voice and VP), my analysis does not make a position for the reflexive pronoun available; only two nominal positions occur in the structure, namely the theme DP (complement to V) and the DI (specifier of Resp). Thus, my analysis cannot be extended easily to languages that allow DIs with marked anticausatives.

6.   Conclusion

In this paper, I have argued that the German Dative of Inaction (DI) does not involve a causative event despite paraphrases and translations that seem to indicate an indirect causer as the referent of the DI. The DI does not behave like clearly causative constructions, such as the Japanese adversity causative. I have provided an event-semantic analysis that classifies the DI as one of Pylkkänen's (2002) high applicative arguments. The meaning of the DI is due to a phonologically null head *Resp(onsible)* which introduces the role of a responsible individual and associates the referent of the DI with this role. The occurrence of the DI is then limited by a selectional requirement that allows only non-agentive Voice to select RespP. Predictions made by my analysis concerning the meaning and *again*-modification support the proposed structure and denotation. Future research will show if/how my analysis can be applied cross-linguistically.

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[10] The sentence is acceptable as a benefactive or affected experiencer construction.

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