

Doubling in relative clauses and the status of relative particles in German dialects (and beyond)*

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Syntax–Semantics Colloquium
Potsdam, 18 July 2017

1 Introduction

relative clauses in Standard German: introduced by demonstrative-based relative pronouns (*d*-pronouns) or *wh*-based relative pronouns:

- (1) a. Das ist die Frau, **die** das Haus gebaut hat.
that.N is the.F woman that.F the.N house built.PTCP has
‘That is the woman who built the house.’
- b. Das ist die Frau, **welche** das Haus gebaut hat.
that.N is the.F woman which.F the.N house built.PTCP has
‘That is the woman who built the house.’

relative pronouns *der/die/das* vs. *welcher/welche/welches* – inflected for gender (dependent on head noun in the matrix clause), number, case

relative pronouns may stem from interrogative pronouns or from demonstrative pronouns cross-linguistically – Van Gelderen (2004; 2009), Roberts & Roussou (2003)

d-pronouns common in Germanic (Brandner & Bräuning 2013), both strategies attested in English historically but *that* has been reanalysed as a complementiser (cf. Van Gelderen 2009):

- (2) a. This is the woman **who** built the house.
b. This is the woman **that** built the house.

*This research was funded by the German Research Fund (DFG), as part of my project “The syntax of functional left peripheries and its relation to information structure”.

structures:

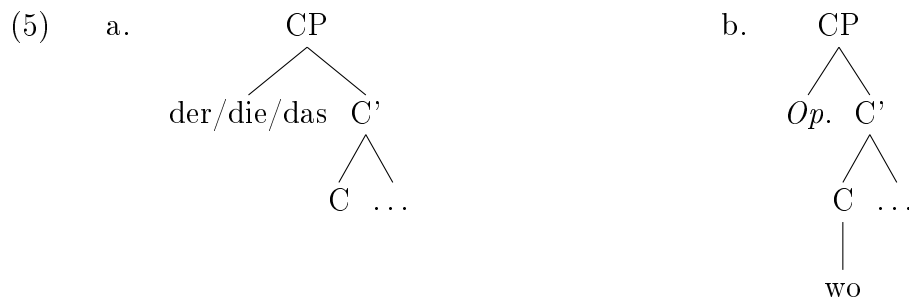


no grammaticalisation of *d*-pronouns into a relative complementiser in German – but: *wh*-based relative complementiser *wo* (also *was*) attested:

- (4) Ich suech ebber **wo** mer helfe künnt.
 I search someone REL I.DAT help.INF could
 ‘I am looking for someone who could help me.’
 (Alemannic; Brandner & Bräuning 2013: 140, ex. 23)

status of *wo* as a complementiser (see Brandner & Bräuning 2013 and Weiß 2013; see also Weiß 2013 for *was* in Northern Bavarian): not inflected, can appear with any matrix nominal head

structures:



patterns in dialects:

- single *wo* or *was* as a uniform relativiser
- combination of a *d*-pronoun and *wo/was* (e.g. *der wo* ‘who’)
- combination of a *wh*-pronouns and *dass* ‘that’ (e.g. *wer dass* ‘who’)
- combination of a *d*-pronoun and *wo* and *dass* ‘that’ (e.g. *der wo dass* ‘who’)

questions:

- why dialects prefer a relative complementiser over an overt relative operator
- why *dass* is inserted in certain cases
- what the structure of doubling patterns is – single vs. double CP
- what the structure of triple combinations is and why they occur with *wo* in Bavarian

proposal:

- regular West-Germanic pattern: lexicalisation of [fin] on C – relative complementisers in C fulfil this
- insertion of *dass* alongside an operator: lexicalisation of [fin]
- doubling patterns are instances of Doubly Filled COMP – single CP
- triple combinations involve a double CP

2 Relative complementisers

various languages have relative complementisers in addition to/instead of relative pronouns – Van Gelderen (2009), citing Comrie (2002): typically European strategy of relative pronouns is rare cross-linguistically

Scandinavian languages have relative complementisers

Norwegian *som*:¹

- (6) Dette er studenten **som** inviterte Mary.
this is the.student that invited.PST Mary
'This is the student who invited Mary.'

Swedish *som*:²

- (7) Detta är studenten **som** bjöd in Mary.
this is the.student who invites in Mary
'This is the student who invites Mary.'

recall: overt marker in an English relative clause either an operator or a complementiser:

- (8) a. This is the woman **who** built the house.
b. This is the woman **that** built the house.

that interchangeable even with PPs involving a *wh*-element (e.g. *from which*), dialect/register variation:

- (9) I haven't been to a party yet **that** I haven't got home the same night.
(Van Gelderen 2009: 161, ex. 8, citing Miller 1993: 112)

¹The Norwegian data stem from the cross-Germanic survey I conducted as part of my project "The syntax of functional left peripheries and its relation to information structure" in 2016/2017. Both of my informants (one from Rogaland county and one from Vest-Agder county) show the same distribution of *som*.

²The Swedish data stem from the cross-Germanic survey I conducted as part of my project "The syntax of functional left peripheries and its relation to information structure" in 2016/2017. Both of my informants (one from the Färgelanda municipality and one from Göteborg) show the same distribution of single *som*.

Van Gelderen (2009: 163): English speakers prefer *that* over a *wh*-pronoun “by at least a 4:1 ratio” (cf. Romaine 1982, Montgomery & Bailey 1991, Van Gelderen 2004), Tagliamonte et al. 2005) – reinforcement of *wh*-pronoun by prescriptive rules

similarly: relative pronouns borrowings from Standard German into Alemannic (see Brandner & Bräuning 2013)

claim of Bacskai-Atkari (2016a; 2017): [fin] on C lexicalised regularly in West Germanic – C filled by a lexical element

German patterns:

- (10)
- a. Anna **hat** ein Haus gekauft.
Anna has a.N house bought.PTCP
‘Anna has bought a house.’
 - b. **Hat** Anna ein Haus gekauft?
has Anna a.N house bought.PTCP
‘Has Anna bought a house?’
 - c. Wann **hat** Anna ein Haus gekauft?
when has Anna a.N house bought.PTCP
‘When did Anna buy a house?’
 - d. Ich weiß, **dass** Anna ein Haus gekauft hat.
I know.1SG that Anna a.N house bought.PTCP has
‘I know that Anna has bought a house.’
 - e. Ich weiß nicht, **ob** Anna ein Haus gekauft hat.
I know.1SG not if Anna a.N house bought.PTCP has
‘I don’t know if Anna has bought a house.’
 - f. Ich weiß nicht, wann (% **dass**) Anna ein Haus gekauft hat.
I know.1SG not when that Anna a.N house bought.PTCP has
‘I don’t know when Anna bought a house.’

complementiser inserted in (10f) in various dialects across Germanic – “Doubly Filled COMP” pattern (see Bacskai-Atkari 2016a, following Bayer & Brandner 2008, contrary to Baltin 2010) – dialectal pattern more conform with the general syntactic paradigm than standard West-Germanic varieties

relative clauses show the same asymmetry between dialects and standard language:

- (11) a. Das ist die Frau, **die** das Haus gebaut hat.
 that.N is the.F woman that.F the.N house built.PTCP has
 ‘That is the woman who built the house.’
- b. Ich suech ebber **wo** mer helfe künnt.
 I search someone REL I.DAT help.INF could
 ‘I am looking for someone who could help me.’
 (Alemannic; Brandner & Bräuning 2013: 140, ex. 23)
- c. Röslen (...), **was** oben am hohlen Wege stehn
 roses REL above at.the empty road stand.3PL
 ‘roses, which are above by the empty road’
 (Bavarian; Weiß 2013: 780, ex. 19c)

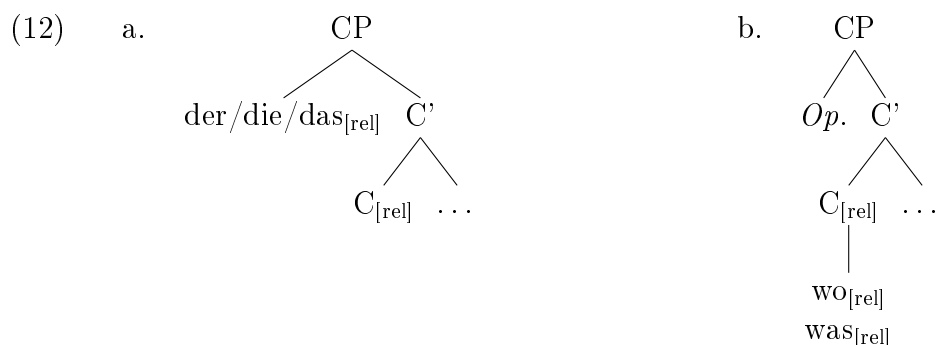
southern dialect areas Alemannic, Hessian and Bavarian show patterns like (10f) in embedded interrogatives and (11b)/(11c) in relative clauses

distribution shows dialectal differences:

- Alemannic: *wo* (Brandner & Bräuning 2013, Weiß 2013)
- Hessian: *wo*; *was* only limited, in many dialects restricted to neuter antecedents (Fleischer 2004; 2017, Weiß 2013), hence rather an operator
- Northern Bavarian: *was* (Weiß 2013)

origin of *wo* and *was*: reanalysis from operator into complementiser (relative cycle of Van Gelderen 2004; 2009) – but: appearance of *wo* in relative clause already as a complementiser, taken over from equatives, as shown by Brandner & Bräuning (2013)

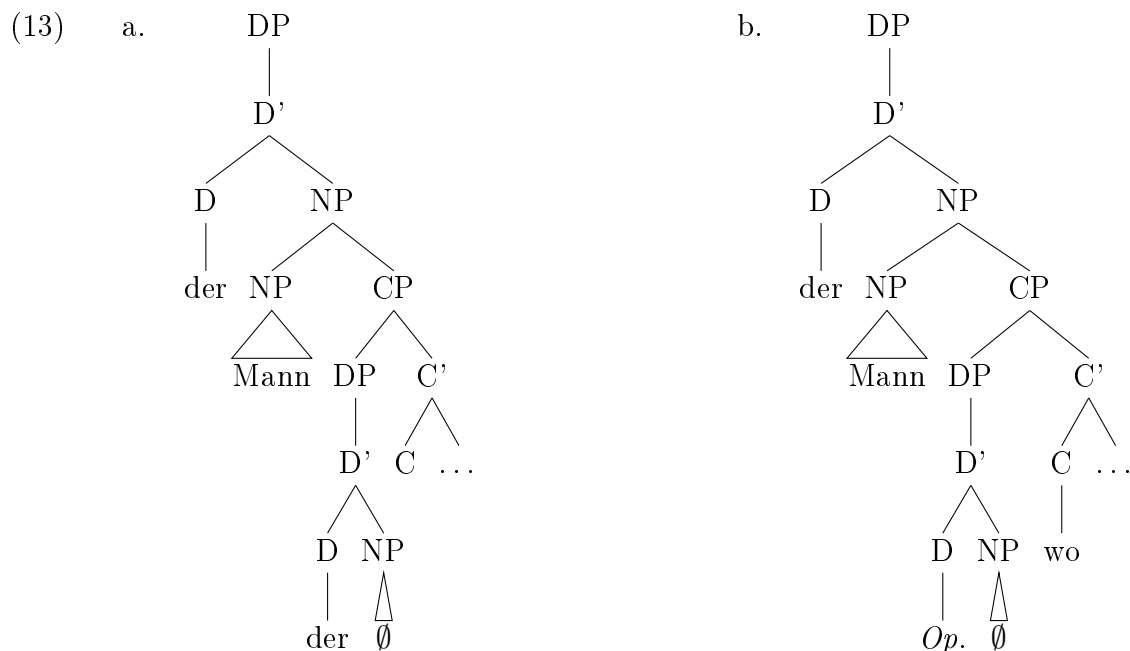
structures with features:



relative nature of the clause (clause type, see Rizzi 1997 on relative as a clause type) marked overtly by *wo/was* or by a relative pronoun

covert operator still there – “gap” in the relative clause, co-reference with the lexical head in the matrix clause (here: essentially a matching analysis, see Lees 1960; 1961, Chomsky 1965, Sauerland 1998; 2003, see Bhatt 2005 for a comparative summary; but NP zero and not deleted)

more detailed structures:



empty NP in subclause: takes its reference from matrix NP

headless relatives: *wh*-pronoun in [Spec,CP], NP has arbitrary reference (no matrix NP)

3 Doubling in relatives with a lexical head

doubling patterns in several Germanic varieties – possible even in Scandinavian varieties that otherwise use/prefer the complementiser-strategy

Norwegian *der som* (dialectal):³

- (14) Dette er byen **der som** eg vart fødd.
 this is the.city which that I was born
 ‘This is the city where I was born.’

Swedish *vilken som* (dialectal):⁴

- (15) Detta är studenten **vilken som** bjöd in Mary.
 this is the.student which that invites in Mary
 ‘This is the student who invites Mary.’

³This option was indicated as possible by my informant from Rogaland county but not by the one from Vest-Agder county.

⁴This option was indicated as possible by my informant from the Färgelanda municipality but not by the one from Göteborg.

patterns:

- *d*-pronoun + *wo* – Alemannic (Brandner & Bräuning 2013), Hessian (Fleischer 2017)
- *d*-pronoun + *was* – Bavarian (Weiß 2013), but not in Hessian (Fleischer 2017)

complementary distribution of *was* and the *d*-pronoun in Hessian indicates that *was* is a relative operator and not a grammaticalised complementiser, unlike in Bavarian

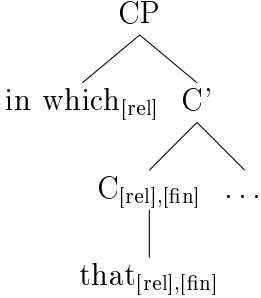
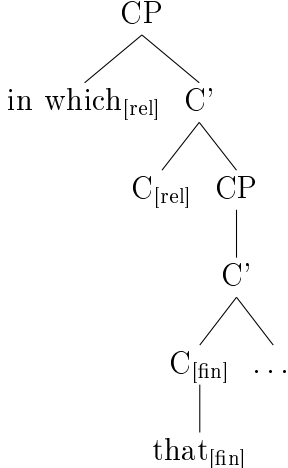
- (16) a. Des Geld, **des wo** ich verdiene, des geheert mir.
 the.N money that.N REL I earn.1SG that.N belongs I.DAT
 ‘The money that I earn belongs to me.’
 (Hessian; Fleischer 2017: ex. 3d)
- b. Mei Häusl (...), **dös wos** dorten unten (...) steht
 my house.DIM that.N REL there below stands
 ‘My little house, which stands down there’
 (Bavarian; Weiß 2013: 780, ex. 19d)

question: whether doubling requires a double CP (as in Baltin 2010) or a single CP suffices

doubling in English relative clauses:

- (17) It’s down to the community **in which that** the people live.
 (Van Gelderen 2013: 59, ex. 8)

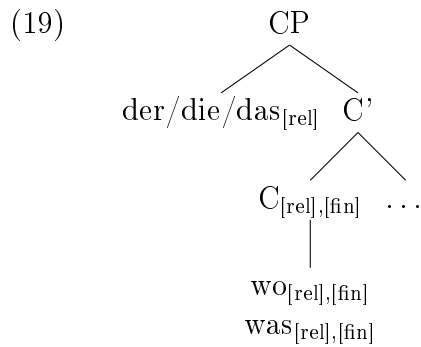
possible structures:

- (18) a. 
- b. 

similarly: doubling in embedded interrogatives may require a split in [wh] and [fin] across CPs (Baltin 2010)

problem: English *that* is ambiguous between the finite subordinator and the relative complementiser, but the German patterns in (16) involve a relative operator and a relative complementiser → functional split between the two CPs is untenable (Bacskai-Atkari 2015; see arguments against a split CP in interrogatives by e.g. Bayer & Brandner 2008, Bacskai-Atkari 2016b)

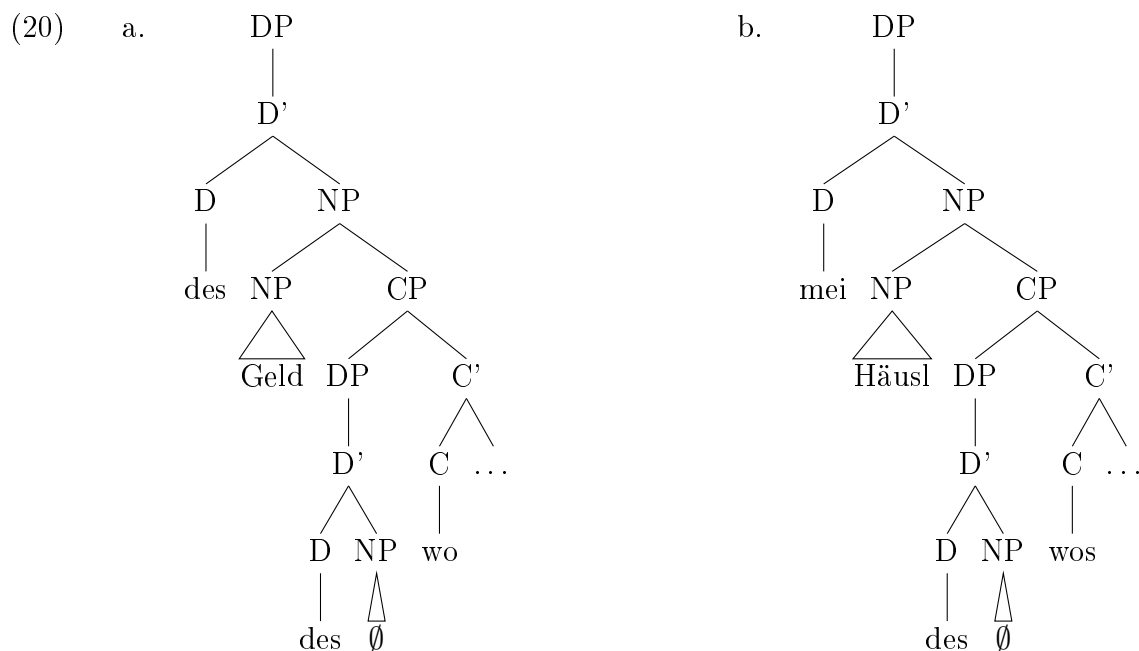
structure for (16):



doubling:

- insertion of the *d*-pronoun: lexicalisation of the relative operator (always possible if there are overt pronouns in the dialect)
- insertion of *wo*: regular way of typing the relative clause, in line with lexicalisation requirement on [fin] in C

more detailed structures:



lexicalisation of the operator and the relative C head

4 Doubling in headless relatives

headless or free relatives contain a *wh*-element:

- (21) a. You should finish **what** you have begun.
- b. Ich nehme **was** du nimmst.
 I take.(1sg) what you take.2SG
 'I'll take what you take.'

no lexical head – empty DP in matrix clause (see e.g. Van Riemsdijk 2006)

German dialectal pattern:

- (22) **wem dass** des zvei is, kann aa wenger zoin
who.DAT that that.N too.much is can.3SG also less pay.INF
'Whoever finds it too much can pay less as well.'
(Bavarian; Weiß 2013: 781, ex. 21c)

complementiser *dass* not a relative complementiser in German

similar doubling patterns in Dutch dialects:

- (23) **Wie dat** er nou trouwt zijn stommerike.
who that there now marries are stupid.ones
'Whoever gets married nowadays is stupid.'
(South Brabant; Zwart 2000: 358, citing Vanacker 1948: 143)

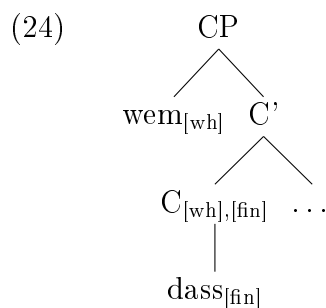
crucially: no *dat*-relatives in Dutch (Zwart 2000: 357)

English: *that*-relatives common, but no *that* in headless relatives like (21a)

essentially no combination of *wh*-pronoun and *som* in Norwegian and Swedish relatives either

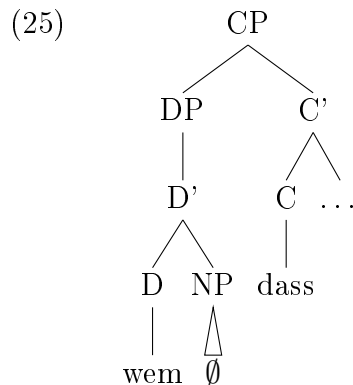
doubling in German dialects: lexicalising [fin] on C by the default complementiser *dass*, just like in embedded interrogatives – no interpretive difference

structure for (22):



clause-typing feature [wh] and not [rel] → incompatibility with *d*-pronouns and with proper relative heads (*wo/was*)

more detailed structure:



complement NP does not require an overt antecedent (similar to ordinary interrogatives)
 – not compatible with all *wh*-pronouns either (e.g. English *which* taking an overt NP complement in interrogatives)

5 Triple combinations

Bavarian: combination of *d*-pronoun + *wo* + *dass* possible (Weiß 2013)

relatives with a lexical NP head:

- (26) dea Mā, **dea wo dass** des gsogd hod
 the.M man that.M REL that that.N said.PTCP has
 ‘the man who said it’
 (Bavarian; Weiß 2013: 781)

headless relatives:

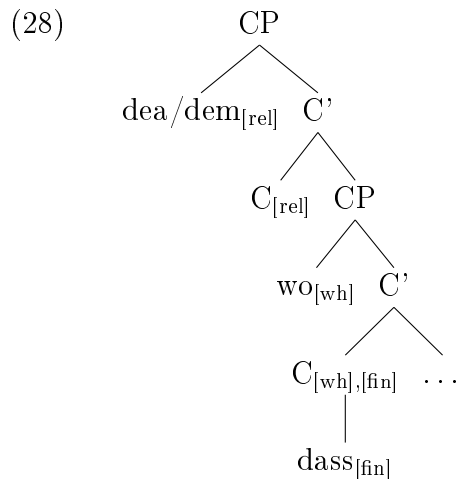
- (27) **dem wo dass** des zvei is, kann aa wenger zoin
 that.M.DAT REL that that.N too.much is can.3SG also less pay.INF
 ‘Whoever finds it too much can pay less as well.’
 (Bavarian; Weiß 2013: 781, ex. 21e)

crucially: such constructions available with *wo* in dialects where the relative complementiser is normally *was* and not *wo* → *wo* has a different status than in Alemannic and Hessian

d-pronoun available in relatives with a distinct lexical head → *d*-pronoun belongs to the relative clause

proposal: *wo* is an operator in these cases

structure:



double CP to host all the elements – but: no designated labels (problem for cartographic approaches: this split does not fit into the Force–Fin scheme)

insertion of *dass*: to lexicalise [fin] on C

operator *wo*:

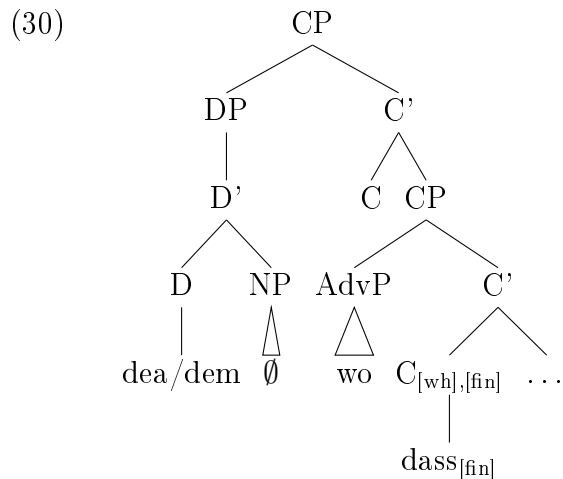
- specified as [wh], unlike *was*, which is invariably [rel] in relative clauses in the relevant dialects – [wh] operator in the scope of the [rel] operator, clause ultimately [rel]
- adverbial element, no NP complement possible → *d*-pronoun inserted
- function of *wo*: purely marking the clause type

similar phenomenon in English with *that which* in headless relatives:

- (29)
- a. You should finish **what** you have begun.
 - b. You should finish **that which** you have begun.

pronoun *which* cannot take a covert NP complement without an overt antecedent – *that* serves as an internal head

more detailed structure:



insertion of *d*-pronoun makes sure that there is an empty NP in the structure – reference either picked up from the matrix clause or arbitrary

6 Conclusion

relative clauses in German dialects (and beyond)

- relative complementisers *wo* and *was* (variation in regional distribution) – lexicalisation of [fin] on C
- doubling patterns involving a *d*-pronoun (in English with a *wh*-pronoun) and the canonical relative complementiser: single CP, lexicalisation of the operator
- doubling patterns involving a *wh*-operator and *dass*: single CP; headless relatives, regularly with *wh*-pronouns anyway (no matrix NP), insertion of *dass* to lexicalise [fin] on C
- triple combinations involving a *d*-pronoun + *wo* + *dass* in Bavarian: double CP, structure involving a clause-typing operator and a *d*-pronoun

variation in relative clauses in German follows from more general properties and from the possibilities of lexicalisation in relative clauses

importance for the theory: the various combinations can be modelled using a minimal, feature-based account and no cartographic template is necessary

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