

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

Julia Bacskai-Atkari

University of Potsdam

julia.bacskai-atkari@uni-potsdam.de

Syntax–Semantics Colloquium
Potsdam, 18 July 2017

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 is the.F woman that.F the house built has
 'That is the woman who built the house.'
- b. Das ist die Frau, **welche** das Haus gebaut hat.
 that is the.F woman which.F the house built has
 'That is the woman who built the house.'

Relative markers

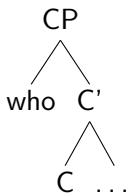
relative pronouns may stem from interrogative pronouns or from demonstrative pronouns cross-linguistically – Van Gelderen (2004, 2009), Roberts & Roussou (2003)

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):

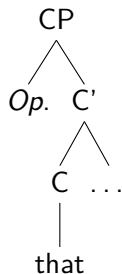
- (2)
- a. This is the woman **who** built the house.
 - b. This is the woman **that** built the house.

Structures

(3) a.



b.



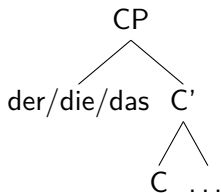
German

- (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)

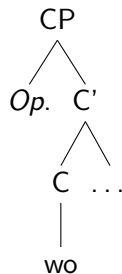
status of *wo* as a complementiser (see Brandner & Bräuning 2013 and Weiß 2013; see also Weiß 2013 for *was* in Northern Bavarian): not inflected, can appear with any matrix nominal head

Structures

(5) a.



b.



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

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

Norwegian

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

Swedish

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

English

- (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)

Relative heads

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

Doubly Filled COMP

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

- (11) a. Das ist die Frau, **die** das Haus gebaut hat.
 that is the.F woman that.F the house built 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
 roses REL above at.the empty road
 stehn
 stand.3PL
 'roses, which are above by the empty road'
 (Bavarian; Weiß 2013, 780, ex. 19c)

Distribution

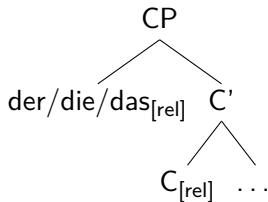
dialectal differences:

- 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)

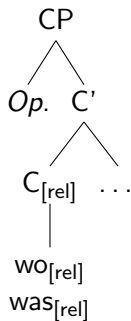
origin of *wo* and *was*: reanalysis from operator into complementiser (relative cycle of Van Gelderen 2004, 2009) – but: appearance of *wo* in relative clause already as a complementiser, taken over from equatives, as shown by Brandner & Bräuning (2013)

Structures

(12) a.



b.



Relative clause type

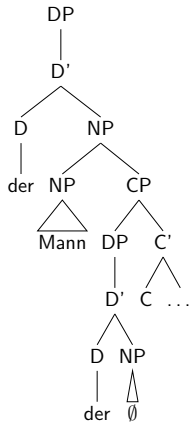
relative nature of the clause (clause type, see Rizzi 1997 on relative as a clause type) marked overtly by *wo/was* or by a relative pronoun

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)

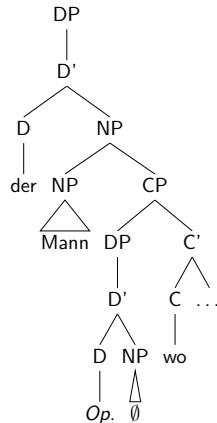
Structures

(13)

a.



b.



Doubling in relatives with a lexical head

Norwegian *der som* (dialectal):

- (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):

- (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.'

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

German

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

Question

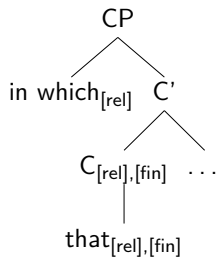
question: whether doubling requires a double CP (as in Baltin 2010) or a single CP suffices

doubling in English relative clauses:

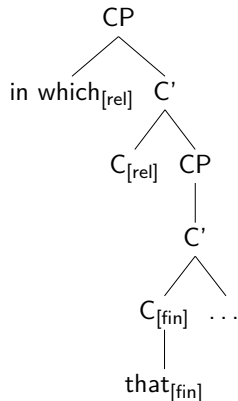
- (17) It's down to the community **in which that** the people live.
(Van Gelderen 2013, 59, ex. 8)

Possible structures

(18) a.



b.



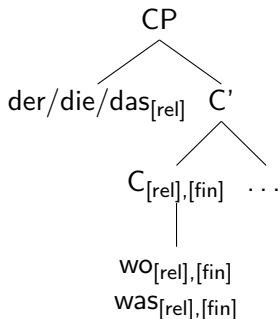
Cartographic approach

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

(19)



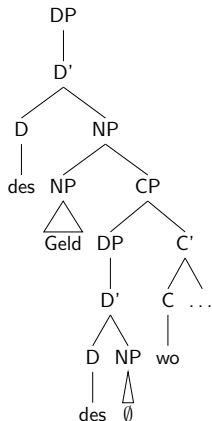
Doubling

- 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

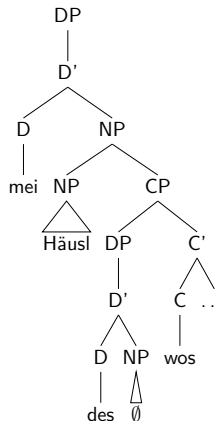
Structures

(20)

a.



b.



Headless relatives

- (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

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

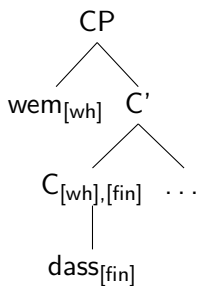
Dutch

- (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)

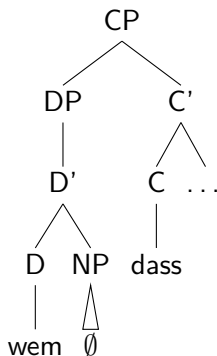
Structure

(24)



More detailed structure

(25)



Triple combinations

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

Relatives with a lexical NP head

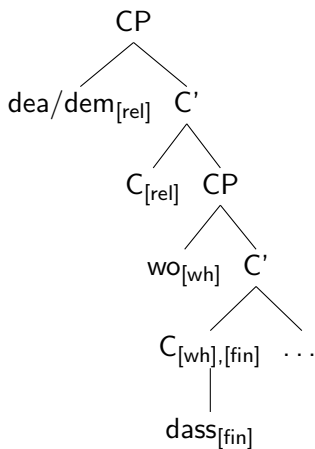
- (26) dea Mã, **dea** **wo dass** des gsogd hod
 the.M man that.M REL that that.N said.PTCP has
 'the man who said it'
 (Bavarian; Weiß 2013, 781)

Headless relatives

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

Structure

(28)



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

English

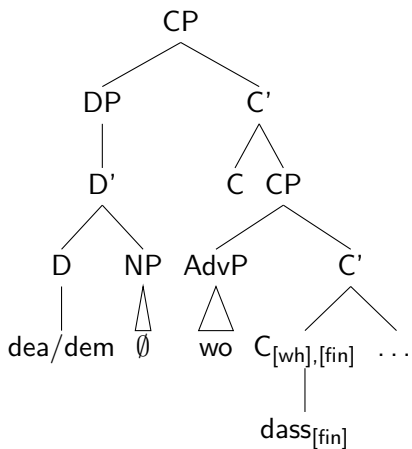
similar phenomenon in English with *that* *which* in headless relatives:

- (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

Structure

(30)



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

Thank you!

Danke!

Acknowledgements

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”.

References I

- Bacskai-Atkari, Julia. 2015. German dialects and an anti-cartographic approach to the CP-domain. Talk delivered at: SaRD*i*S 2015: Saarbrücker Runder Tisch für Dialektsyntax, Saarbrücken, Universität des Saarlandes, 6–7 November 2015.
- Bacskai-Atkari, Julia. 2016a. Doubling in the CP in West-Germanic and the Doubly Filled COMP Filter. Talk delivered at: Syntax–Semantics Colloquium, Potsdam, Universität Potsdam, 10 April 2016.
- Bacskai-Atkari, Julia. 2016b. Doubly Filled COMP und polare Fragen im Westgermanischen. Talk delivered at: SaRD*i*S 2016: Saarbrücker Runder Tisch für Dialektsyntax, Saarbrücken, Universität des Saarlandes, 4–5 November 2016.

References II

- Bacskai-Atkari, Julia. 2017. Clause typing, verb movement, and non-canonical matrix word orders. Talk delivered at: Lund–Potsdam–Budapest Linguistics Colloquium, Lund, University of Lund, 15–16 June 2017.
- Baltin, Mark. 2010. The nonreality of doubly filled Comps. *Linguistic Inquiry* 41(2). 331–335.
- Bayer, Josef & Ellen Brandner. 2008. On wh-head-movement and the Doubly-Filled-Comp Filter. In Charles B. Chang & Hannah J. Haynie (eds.), *Proceedings of the 26th West Coast Conference on Formal Linguistics*, 87–95. Somerville, MA: Cascadilla Proceedings Project.

References III

- Bhatt, Rajesh. 2005. Three theories of relative clauses. Talk delivered at: LOT Summer School on “The Syntax and Semantics of Nominal Modification”.
- Brandner, Ellen & Iris Bräuning. 2013. The particle *wo* in Alemannic: Only a complementizer? *Linguistische Berichte* 234. 131–169.
- Chomsky, Noam. 1965. *Aspects of the theory of syntax*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Comrie, Bernard. 2002. ‘rethinking relative clause types. In Paolo Ramat & Thomas Stolz (eds.), *Mediterranean languages*, 87–98. Bochum: Universitätsverlag Brockmeyer.

References IV

- Fleischer, Jürg. 2004. A typology of relative clauses in German dialects. In Bernd Kortmann (ed.), *Trends in linguistics: Dialectology meets typology*, 211–243. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter.
- Fleischer, Jürg. 2017. Relativsatz-Einleitung. In *SyHD-atlas*. Available at <http://www.syhd.info/apps/atlas/#relativsatz-einleitung> (last accessed: 14 July 2017).
- Gelderen, Elly van. 2004. *Grammaticalization as economy*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- Gelderen, Elly van. 2009. Renewal in the left periphery: Economy and the complementiser layer. *Transactions of the Philological Society* 107(2). 131–195.

References V

- Gelderen, Elly van. 2013. *Clause structure*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Lees, Robert B. 1960. *The grammar of English nominalizations*. The Hague: Mouton.
- Lees, Robert B. 1961. The constituent structure of Noun Phrases. *American Speech* 36. 159–168.
- Miller, Jim. 1993. The grammar of Scottish English. In James Milroy & Lesley Milroy (eds.), *Real English*, 99–138. London: Longman.
- Montgomery, Michael & Guy Bailey. 1991. *In which*: A new form in written English. *American Speech* 66. 147–163.

References VI

- Riemsdijk, Henk van. 2006. Free relatives. In Martin Everaert & Henk van Riemsdijk (eds.), *The Blackwell companion to syntax Vol. i*, 338–382. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Rizzi, Luigi. 1997. The fine structure of the left periphery. In Liliane Haegeman (ed.), *Elements of grammar*, 281–337. Dordrecht: Kluwer.
- Roberts, Ian & Anna Roussou. 2003. *Syntactic change: A minimalist approach to grammaticalization*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Romaine, Suzanne. 1982. *Socio-historical linguistics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Sauerland, Uli. 1998. *The meaning of chains*: MIT dissertation.

References VII

- Sauerland, Uli. 2003. Unpronounced heads in relative clauses. In Kerstin Schwabe & Susanne Winkler (eds.), *The interfaces: Deriving and interpreting omitted structures*, 205–226. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- Tagliamonte, Sali, Jennifer Smith & Helen Lawrence. 2005. No taming the vernacular! Insights from the relatives in northern Britain. *Language Variation and Change* 17. 75–112.
- Vanacker, Valeer Frits. 1948. *Syntaxis van het Aalsters dialect*. Tongeren: Michiels.
- Weiß, Helmut. 2013. Satztyp und Dialekt. In Jörg Meibauer et al. (eds.), *Satztypen des Deutschen*, 764–785. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter.

References VIII

Zwart, Jan-Wouter. 2000. A head raising analysis of relative clauses in Dutch. In Artemis Alexiadou (ed.), *The syntax of relative clauses*, 349–385. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.