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

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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.

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structures:

(3) a. CP
    \[\text{who C'}
    \]
    \[C \ldots\]

b. CP
    \[\text{Op. C'}
    \]
    \[C \ldots\]

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

(4) Ich suche ebber \textit{wo} mer helfen künnt.
   \textit{I search someone REL LDAT help-INF could}
   ‘I am looking for someone who could help me.’
   (Alemannic; Brandner & Bräuning 2013: 140, ex. 23)

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

structures:

(5) a. CP
    \[\text{der/die/das C'}
    \]
    \[C \ldots\]

b. CP
    \[\text{Op. C'}
    \]
    \[C \ldots\]

patterns in dialects:

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

questions:

- why dialects prefer a relative complementiser over an overt relative operator
- why \textit{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 \textit{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:

(6) Dette er studenten som inviterte Mary.
This is the student who invited Mary.
‘This is the student who invited Mary.’

Swedish som:

(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)

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1 The 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.

2 The 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.

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 suche ebber wo mer helfe könnt.  
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:

(12)  a. CP  
    der/die/das_[rel] C’  
    C_[rel] ...  

b. CP  
    Op. C’  
    C_[rel] ...  

    wo_[rel]  
    was_[rel]

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:

(13) a. DP
    |    D’
    |      D
    |       NP
    |         der
    |           NP
    |             CP
    |               Mann
    |                 D’
    |                   C’
    |                     ...
    |                       D’
    |                         C
    |                           ...
    |                             D
    |                               NP
    |                                 der
    |                                   Ṙ

b. DP
    |    D’
    |      D
    |       NP
    |         der
    |           NP
    |             CP
    |               Mann
    |                 D’
    |                   C’
    |                     ...
    |                       D’
    |                         C
    |                           ...
    |                             D
    |                               NP
    |                                   Ṙ

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

    the.N money that.N REL I earn.1SG that.N belongs 1.DAT
    ‘The money that I earn belongs to me.’
    (Hessian; Fleischer 2017: ex. 3d)

    b. Mei Häusl (...), *dös was dorten unten* (...), steht
    my house.DOIM 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. \[CP \text{in which}_{rel} C’\]
    \[C_{rel}[\text{fin}] \ldots \]
    \[ that_{rel}[\text{fin}] \]

    b. \[CP \text{in which}_{rel} C’\]
    \[C_{rel} CP \]
    \[C_{fin} \ldots \]
    \[ that_{fin} \]

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 (Bacskaia-Atkari 2015; see arguments against a split CP in interrogatives by e.g. Bayer & Brandner 2008, Bacskaia-Atkari 2016b)
structure for (16):

\[(19)\]
\[
\text{CP} \quad \text{der/die/das}_{\text{rel}} \quad C' \\
\quad \text{C}_{\text{rel},[\text{fin}]} \quad \ldots \\
\quad \text{wo}_{\text{rel},[\text{fin}]} \\
\quad \text{wäs}_{\text{rel},[\text{fin}]} \\
\]
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 \([\text{fin}]\) in \(C\)

more detailed structures:

\[(20)\]

\[\begin{aligned}
\text{a. DP} & \quad \text{b. DP} \\
\text{D'} & \\
\text{D} & \quad \text{D'} \\
\text{des} & \quad \text{des} \\
\text{NP} & \quad \text{NP} \\
\text{DP} & \quad \text{C'} \\
\text{Geld} & \quad \text{D'} \\
\text{C} & \quad \text{C} \\
\ldots & \quad \ldots \\
\text{D} & \quad \text{D} \\
\text{NP} & \quad \text{NP} \\
\text{wo} & \quad \text{wo} \\
\text{des} & \quad \text{des} \\
\emptyset & \quad \emptyset \\
\end{aligned}\]

lexicalisation of the operator and the relative \(C\) head

4 Doubling in headless relatives

headless or free relatives contain a \(wh\)-element:

\[(21)\]

\[\begin{aligned}
\text{a. You should finish} & \quad \text{what you have begun.} \\
\text{b. Ich nehme} & \quad \text{was du nimmst.} \\
& \quad \text{I take.(1sg) what you take.2sg} \\
& \quad \text{‘I’ll take what you take.’} \\
\end{aligned}\]
no lexical head – empty DP in matrix clause (see e.g. Van Riemsdijk 2006)

German dialectal pattern:

(22)  \textit{wem dass des zvei is, kaa aa wenger zoin}
\textit{who.DAT that that.N too.much is can.3SG also less pay.INF}
\textit{‘Whoever finds it too much can pay less as well.’}
(Bavarian; Weis 2013: 781, ex. 21c)

complementiser \textit{dass} not a relative complementiser in German

similar doubling patterns in Dutch dialects:

(23)  \textit{Wie dat er nu trouwt zijn stommerike.}
\textit{who dat there now marries are stupid.ones}
\textit{‘Whoever gets married nowadays is stupid.’}
(South Brabant; Zwart 2000: 358, citing Vanacker 1948: 143)

crucially: no \textit{dat}-relatives in Dutch (Zwart 2000: 357)

English: \textit{that}-relatives common, but no \textit{that} in headless relatives like (21a)

essentially no combination of \textit{wh}-pronoun and \textit{som} in Norwegian and Swedish relatives either

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

structure for (22):

(24)  \[ \begin{array}{c}
\text{CP} \\
\text{wem}_{[\text{wh}]} & \text{C’} \\
\text{C}_{[\text{wh},[\text{fin}]} & \text{dass}_{[\text{fin}]} \\
\end{array} \]

clause-typing feature \textit{[wh]} and not \textit{[rel]} → incompatibility with \textit{d}-pronouns and with proper relative heads (\textit{wo/ was})
complement NP does not require an overt antecedent (similar to ordinary interro-gatives)
- not compatible with all wh-pronouns either (e.g. English which taking an overt
NP complement in interro-gatives)

5 Triple combinations

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

relatives with a lexical NP head:

(26) dea Mä, dea wo dass des gsogd hod
the. M man that. M REL that. N REL 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. N REL 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 com-
plementiser 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:

(28)

\[
\begin{array}{c}
\text{CP} \\
\text{de}a/\text{dem}_{\text{rel}} \quad C' \\
\text{C}_{\text{rel}} \quad \text{CP} \\
\text{wo}_{\text{wh}} \quad C' \\
\text{C}_{\text{wh},\text{fin}} \quad \ldots \\
d\text{ass}_{\text{n}}
\end{array}
\]

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 \textit{dass}: to lexicalise \textit{[fin]} on C

operator \textit{wo}:

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

similar phenomenon in English with \textit{that which} in headless relatives:

(29) a. You should finish \textit{what} you have begun.
    b. You should finish \textit{that which} you have begun.

pronoun \textit{which} cannot take a covert NP complement without an overt antecedent – \textit{that} serves as an internal head

11
more detailed structure:

(30)

\[
\begin{array}{c}
\text{CP} \\
\downarrow \\
\text{DP} \\
\downarrow \\
\text{D'} \\
\downarrow \\
\text{C'} \\
\downarrow \\
\text{C} \\
\downarrow \\
\text{AdvP} \\
\downarrow \\
\text{dass} \\
\end{array}
\]

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

References


