

Pôle des langues et civilisations  
65 Rue des Grands Moulins  
75013 Paris

**Lundi 12 décembre 14h30 - 18h30**

Salle du Conseil 4.24

## INTERNATIONAL WORKSHOP Relative clauses and areal typology in West Asia

- 14h30 **Werner ARNOLD** (Université de Heidelberg)  
*Relative Clauses in the Arabic Dialects of Hatay and in Western Neo-Aramaic*
- 15h30 **Emanuela SANFELICI** (Goethe Universität, Frankfurt)  
*Avoiding the production of German (object) relative clauses: An investigation of children's alternative responses*
- 16h30 **Pause café**
- 16h45 **Katherine HODGSON** (Inalco-SeDyL-Labex EFL)  
*Relative Clause and accessibility hierarchy in Armenian dialects*
- 17h45 **Victoria KHURSHUDIAN** (Inalco-SeDyL-Labex EFL)  
*Note on relative pronouns in Eastern Armenian*
- 18h15 *Closing remarks*

## Résumés - Abstracts

**Werner ARNOLD, Universität Heidelberg, [werner.arnold@ori.uni-heidelberg.de](mailto:werner.arnold@ori.uni-heidelberg.de)**

*Relative Clauses in the Arabic Dialects of Hatay and in Western Neo-Aramaic*

In Hatay the relative particle *illi* in the Arabic dialects of the Christians and the Alawis is usually shortened to *il* and coincided with the definite article *il-*. This is not the case with the relative particle *əlli* in the dialect of the Jews of Hatay and is the majority of the Syro-palestinian dialects. Western Neo-Aramaic has a relative particle *ti* (also *či*, in Bax‘a only *či*, all < \*d-), which is used also as genitive marker. The influence of Arabic on Western Neo-Aramaic regarding the lexicon is very strong but there is only little influence in the area of syntax. One example of syntactic influence is the relative clause. The way of subordinating relative clauses in Western Neo-Aramaic is fully compatible with Arabic. In syndetic relative clauses the antecedent of the relative clause is definite and followed by the relative particle while asyndetic relative clauses have no relative particle and the antecedent is indefinite. In old Aramaic such asyndetic relative clauses are unattested and must be considered as borrowed from Arabic. See the following examples from the Arabic dialect of the Alawites in the village of Eriklikuyüköyü in Hatay and in the Aramaic village of Ma‘lūla:

**asyndetic:**

mayġū	la-‘ind-i	šiyaṭīn	badd-i(n)	yixniqū ney#
come-3pl.pres.	to with-sf.1sg	demon-pl.indef.	want-sf.3pl.	strangle-subj.3pl.sf.1sg.pausal

Demons are coming to me who want to strangle me.

wōṭ	rō‘ya	‘am-ra‘ēl	‘izzō-ye
there was	shepherd-indef.	herd-3sg.pres.det.	goat-pl.sf.3sg.m

There was a shepherd, (who was) herding his goats.

**syndetic:**

hāda	li	miriḏ
dem-pron.sg.m	rel.pron	sicken-3sg.m.pret.

This (man) who sickened.

hanna	ġamla	ti	ṭ‘il-le
dem-pron.3sg.m	camel-def.	rel.pron	carry -perf.3g.m-sf.3sg.m

This camel, which has carried him.

The reason for this syntactic borrowing can be found in the complex determination system of Western Neo-Aramaic.

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*Avoiding the production of German (object) relative clauses: An investigation of children’s alternative responses*

It is well established that the production of relative clauses (RCs) and especially of a particular type of object relative clauses (ORCs), *viz.* ORCs with animate lexically restricted nominal expressions in both subject and object position, constitutes a challenge for children. Acquisition studies have in fact reported that when confronted with these challenges, children systematically produce a series of alternative structures instead of target RCs. However, a precise characterization and analysis of these structures is usually missing in the literature. This holds particularly for German. Following the trend in acquisition research that examines non-target structures as a means of shedding light onto children’s syntactic competence, in this study we focus on German and on children’s non-target-like production. We therefore investigate which alternative responses children resort to when faced with difficulties encountered in RCs and, in particular, with ORCs with two animate lexical nominal expressions. By comparing children’s and adults’ responses, we further examine how children’s production deviate from that of adults on a qualitative dimension. In so doing, we provide a novel evaluation of three theoretical accounts to language acquisition, *i.e.* processing, grammatical, and usage-based approaches, with respect to their predictions concerning alternative responses. We therefore test which

approach is better suited to account for our data. A total of 133 German-speaking children aged 3 to 6 and 21 adults were tested with a picture-supported elicited production task. By including 3-year-old children, we extended the developmental trajectory of the production of RCs identified by previous studies (Adani, Stegenwallner-Schütz, Haendler and Zukowski, 2016), which covered children from age 4 onwards. In addition, we offer a novel classification of alternative responses based on their syntactic and semantic properties. Our data show that RCs are usually avoided by producing syntactically simpler structures that do not involve embedding and A' movement. Children overcome the difficulties faced in ORCs with two animate lexical nominals by means of two strategies: (i) by creating a mismatch in the lexical specification of the moved object and the RC-internal subject, and (ii) by converting ORCs into subject RCs with either incorrect semantics or with the predicate in passive voice. The most intriguing result concerns the qualitative comparison between children's and adults' production. Children from age 3 onwards produce passive subject RCs in an adult-like fashion, despite structural complexity and near-absence of input as corpus analyses of child-directed speech demonstrated (Abbot-Smith and Behrens, 2006; Dittmar, 2014). When considered against the input children are exposed to, our findings support grammatical and processing accounts but resist explanations in terms of experience-based approaches. These results further underscore the fact that although children's and adults' abilities may differ quantitatively in their production of RCs, when the relevant syntactic production begins and the mechanisms for A' movement and embedding are in place, they do not differ qualitatively at least within the confines of the phenomena under investigation, thereby lending support to the Continuity Assumption (Pinker, 1984; Crain and Thornton, 1998).

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Armenian makes use of both finite and non-finite (participial) relative clauses. It has been stated that the non-finite forms are restricted to roles high up on the AH (essentially subject and direct object), while finite forms may be used for any syntactic role. Previous work has shown that participial RCs are more widely used in Armenian dialects than in literary Armenian, perhaps as a result of contact with languages that have fewer, or different, restrictions on participle use. Competing, or perhaps complementary explanations have been proposed for relativization accessibility patterns across languages. On the one hand, relativization accessibility has been linked to syntactic structure, with relativization of 'high' positions involving a lower degree of structural complexity. However, it has also been proposed that the pragmatic properties of the relativized element affect its accessibility to relativization, essentially, that pragmatic salience/accessibility facilitates relativization. It has also been suggested that semantic properties play a role, in that when the role of the relativized element in the RC is predictable from its semantic properties and those of the other elements of the clause, relativization is easier (more frequent and/or accessible to less explicit forms). The purpose of this study is to attempt to identify the factors that determine the use of finite vs. non-finite RCs in Armenian dialects, and possibly shed light on the nature of the AH itself. A production task similar to the 'short stories' used by Costa et al. (2014) and others was designed to elicit relative clauses with various combinations of syntactic, semantic and pragmatic properties, in order to test the distribution of finite and non-finite relative clause forms in Armenian dialects in the light of various claims that have been made about relativization accessibility.

The results are broadly consistent with the AH, in that participial forms are the preferred type of RC for subjects and (inanimate) direct objects, and permissible but dispreferred for other syntactic roles. However, there is conflicting data on DOs, implying that factors other than syntactic position are at work, and that semantic properties are relevant. Also, contrary to AH, indirect object of ditransitive shows the lowest number of non-finite responses, below possessor and oblique. It would appear to be significant that participial non-subject RCs generally seem to only allow one overt argument, which is a possible reason for the scarcity of IO responses, and suggests an interpretation involving structural complexity as proposed in terms of processing by Hawkins (2004), supported by the fact that this restriction does not apply to subject RCs. However, there are phenomena that cannot be explained in terms of structural complexity alone, for example, the fact that possessor shows a significantly higher number of non-finite responses than oblique or indirect object, something that runs contrary to Hawkins's predictions. A possible explanation for the relatively high accessibility of possessor (of subject) is that the non-finite constructions in question, which use the subject participle, involve the possessor-antecedent, which is generally more pragmatically salient than the possessed-subject, being accorded subject properties, as also occurs in Turkish (Haig 1998). There are

also comparable examples in which the subject participle is used for other types of non-subjects that may be considered pragmatically more prominent than the subject, including the sole clear example of participle use for IO, which are also paralleled in Turkish (Haig 1998). These could thus be considered instances of subject relativization, with the difference that here, subject properties are assigned on pragmatic rather than syntactic grounds. Unlike in Turkish, these uses of the subject participle cannot be linked to morphological properties of the syntactic subject, and thus are not straightforwardly susceptible to the types of syntactic interpretations that have been proposed for Turkish (e.g. Kornfilt 2008, Cagri 2005), although the phenomena are clearly parallel. There are interesting implications for the processes behind these constructions, both in terms of syntax and of language contact, and behind the AH effects more generally.

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*Relative Pronouns in Armenian*

Alongside with different participial strategies, the relative in Armenian can be expressed by a subordinate relative clause introduced by: 1) a relative pronoun with a full nominal paradigm in singular and in plural, 2) the invariable relativizer/complementizer, and 3) a set of case-marked semantically-dependent interrogative pronouns. Some combinations of these three strategies are also possible. The antecedent has often a demonstrative attribute. The domain nominal can extend from a single nominal element to the whole matrix clause. The relativization is applicable to almost all the syntactic roles. The relative pronominal marking is accompanied by the movement to the clause-initial position and the relative clause is by default postnominal in respect to the matrix clause, though prenominal (especially in topicalized constructions) and interposed options are also possible. External embedded and free relative structures are typical of Armenian. Pronominal omission strategy is ungrammatical, instead participial relativization is widely used. It is argued that the choice of the relative marking strategy depends on the referential peculiarities and semantic-syntactic criteria of the antecedent and the relative clause.