

On the composition of modifying locative clauses

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This talk addresses the grammar of PP-like free relatives (= PP-FRs) such as the modifying locative clause in *Bello schläft, wo Grace schläft* ‘Bello is sleeping where Grace is sleeping’. The most prominent compositional analysis of PP-FRs is developed by Caponigro (2004), Caponigro & Pearl (2009), and Hall & Caponigro (2010). They derive PP-FRs from a stacked CP-structure that is based on silent prepositions and a nominal treatment of *wh*-words such as *where*. I first take issue with this analysis by means of a detailed discussion of subordinate clauses introduced by *wo* ‘where’ in German. Specifically, I show that *wo*-clauses do not involve silent prepositions, and that both *wo* and *wo*-clauses have a prepositional instead of a nominal nature. Second, I sketch a surface-oriented alternative approach to PP-FRs that dispenses with silent prepositions and assigns the prepositional nature of PP-like *wh*-words a key role in the derivation. Specifically, I propose that the fronting of PP-like *wh*-words in free relatives licenses an abstraction over predicates (instead of entities) and a corresponding type shifting. The new analysis is related to analyses of corresponding subordinate headed relative and interrogative clauses. Furthermore, it is confronted with potential general constraints on higher-order abstraction as argued for, in particular, by Poole (2017).

References

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