
Discourse structure of relative constructions

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In Romance languages, mood distinctions are paired with differences in the interpretation of the head noun of relative clauses (RCs). In (1a) – for Italian – Gianni is looking for a specific woman, while in (1b) a speaker- and hearer-new discourse referent is established. In Modern German, the same distinction can be expressed with Vfinal (Vf-RCs) and V2-RCs, respectively (Ebert *et al.* 2007). While the Vf-RC in (2a) is ambiguous between a *de re* and a *de dicto* reading, the V2-RC in (2b) is only compatible with a *de re* interpretation of the head noun:

- (1) a. Gianni cerca una donna che **ha** gli occhi blu. (*de re*)
Gianni looks.for a woman that has.IND the eyes blue
- b. Gianni cerca una donna che **abbia** gli occhi blu. (*de dicto*)
Gianni looks.for a woman that has.SUB the eyes blue
- (2) a. Hans sucht eine Frau, die blaue Augen **hat**. (*de re/de dicto*)
Hans looks.for a woman who blue eyes has
- b. Hans sucht eine Frau, die **hat** blaue Augen. (*de re/*de dicto*)
Hans looks.for a woman who has blue eyes

German lost mood distinctions in RCs in the course of its history. However, Old High German (OHG) not only allowed for V2 as well as for Vf orders, but also productively used the relevant mood distinctions:

- (3) Huuer ist dher dhiz al ni **chisehe** [...]? (I, De Fide, 8, 3)
who is who this all Neg sees.SUB

This paper will tackle the question how verb position and mood distinctions interact in OHG RCs and will present a study on the syntax, IS and discourse-structural interpretation of OHG RCs and their diachronic development.

References: • Ebert, C., C. Endriss & H.-M. Gärtner (2007): An Information Structural Account of German Integrated Verb Second Clauses. In *Semantic Compositionality*, ed. Frank Richter & Manfred Sailer, 415–434.