

Antomo, Mailin / Yuqiu Chen & Maik Thalmann: (Un)Selbstständigkeit von Sätzen und Main Point of Utterance: Appositive Relativsätze und deren Erwerb. In: *Neues zur Selbstständigkeit von Sätzen* (Linguistische Berichte Sonderheft 30) ed. by Robert Külpmann & Rita Finkbeiner, 257–279.

Abstract:

Regarding the function of appositive relative clauses (ARCs), it has often been reported that they belong to the information-structural background, i.e., that they are non-at-issue. Generally, they introduce new information, but mark it as being secondary and thus not available for immediate discussion without dedicated devices. In this contribution, we will embed these intuitions in a question-driven discourse model (Stutterheim 1989; Roberts 1996; Simons/Tonhauser/Beaver/Roberts 2010) and assess them experimentally. It will be argued that ARCs customarily express a proposition that does not aim to answer the current Question Under Discussion (QUD). In the second part of the contribution, this assumption is tested for ARCs in the German Mittelfeld ('middle field') in an experimental setting that also probes their acquisition. The results confirm the non-at-issueness of ARCs: adults judge ARCs that target the QUD as markedly worse than those that make a contribution unrelated to the QUD. Preschoolers were sensitive to this distinction as well, though less strongly so than adults. This indicates that for ARCs syntactic dependence correlates with information-structural status, though this does not extend to other complex clauses in German. The assumption of a dedicated functional clause type reminiscent of constructional approaches seems to us a plausible one in this case.