

Call for papers

Full title: **Adverbial clauses as relative clauses: Old questions, new answers**

Date: October 23-24, 2025

Location: Hamburg, Germany

Organizers: Stefan Hinterwimmer (University of Hamburg) & Łukasz Jędrzejowski (University of Agder)

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Web site: <http://www.lukasz-jedrzejowski.eu/adverbial-clauses-2/>

Call deadline: September 20th, 2025

Meeting description:

Subordinate clauses are among the most prominent linguistic phenomena illustrating the capacity of a computational mechanism to generate recursive structures. A central question in this domain is whether all subordination strategies can be reduced to a single abstract structure. This issue has inspired several productive lines of inquiry. One influential hypothesis is that complement clauses, particularly those embedded under factive predicates, may be analyzed as a subtype of (co-)relative clauses (cf. Aboh 2005; Kayne 2008, 2010; Arsenijević 2009; Krapova 2010, among others).

Building on these insights, recent synchronic research has extended similar structural analyses to adverbial clause linkage. A growing number of studies suggest that many adverbial clauses exhibit key syntactic features traditionally associated with (co-)relative clauses. This challenges the long-standing binary distinction between relative and adverbial clause types (cf. Geis 1970; Larson 1985, 1990, 2016; Geis & Lycan 1993; Donati 1997; Bhatt & Pantcheva 2006; Kayne 2008; Haegeman 2010; Hall & Caponigro 2010; Arsenijević 2021, among many others). From a diachronic perspective, individual case studies provide further support for this view. For instance, Axel-Tober (2012) traces the development of temporal *da*-clauses in German to (co-)relative origins, while Sanfelici & Rodeghiero (2024) offer a similar account for causal *siccome*-clauses in Italian.

Despite these converging lines of evidence, recent work has raised critical questions about the validity and explanatory power of these analyses. De Cuba (2017, 2023) argues that many (co-)relative clause analyses lack detailed syntactic elaboration and are often driven more by theoretical considerations than empirical necessity. He underscores the fundamental differences between complement clauses and relative clauses, noting that the former do not involve operator movement and differ in their use of complementizers, the possibility of complementizer omission, agreement patterns, and the licensing of main clause phenomena. Similar critiques have been leveled against the analysis of adverbial clauses as (co-)relative structures. Adverbial clauses, in contrast to relative clauses, are typically found in peripheral positions, show no clear evidence of operator movement, do not give rise to the same island effects, and are not characterized by obligatory gaps (cf. Cinque 2008; Haegeman 2012). Moreover, while Heine and Kuteva (2002, 2007) document cases in which adverbial subordinators such as *when*, *because*, or *if* develop from relative clause structures, they also show that in many languages,

these forms arise from other sources, including speech act verbs, discourse markers, nominalized verbs, and aspectual constructions.

Against this backdrop, the main aim of the conference is to bring together recent theoretical and experimental research exploring the analysis of adverbial clauses as (co-)relative structures from both synchronic and diachronic perspectives. By revisiting this long-standing question, we hope to contribute novel theoretical insights into the extent to which a (co-)relative clause analysis can account for the syntactic and semantic properties of adverbial subordination.

The international conference "Adverbial clauses as relative clauses: Old questions, new answers" is organized as part of the scientific network *Adverbial Clauses and Subordinate Dependency Relationships*, funded by the German Science Foundation (grant number 455700544) and granted to Łukasz Jędrzejowski. The network is currently led by Andreas Pankau. The conference will be hosted by the *Institut für Germanistik* at the University of Hamburg on October 23-24, 2025, and is organized by Stefan Hinterwimmer and Łukasz Jędrzejowski.

Invited speakers (all confirmed):

Boban Arsenijević (University of Graz)
David Pesetsky (MIT)
Emanuela Sanfelici (University of Padova)
David Willis (University of Oxford)

Call for papers:

Topics for the conference include, but are not limited to, the following questions:

- To what extent can adverbial clauses be uniformly analyzed as (co-)relative structures across different syntactic environments and languages? Does this analysis account for all types of adverbial clauses? What are the limits of such an approach? In what ways do the structures of adverbial clauses overlap with those of (co-)relative clauses?
- In what ways do the distributional properties and structural positions of adverbial clauses differ from those of relative clauses? What do these differences imply for unified analyses? Can the variation in complementizer use, agreement, and main clause phenomena across complement, adverbial, and relative clauses be accounted for using a single abstract pattern, or do they point to fundamentally distinct derivational mechanisms?
- How do diachronic pathways of adverbial subordinators support or undermine the hypothesis of their origin in relative clause structures? Which types of adverbial clauses (e.g., temporal, causal, conditional) show the strongest historical connection to relative clause structures? What kinds of morphosyntactic evidence (e.g., case marking, word order) suggest a relative clause origin? What role do contact-induced changes or areal patterns play in shaping the evolution of adverbial subordinators from relative structures?

The conference aims to provide a theoretical perspective on the analysis of adverbial clauses within the framework of various relativization strategies. It will be preceded by an international workshop on verb-first adverbial clauses from a cross-linguistic perspective, which will take place at the University of Hamburg on 22 October 2025.

We invite the submission of abstracts for 40-minute oral presentations (plus an additional 20 minutes for questions) on topics that address issues related to the analysis of adverbial clauses as relative or correlative clauses. These may include case studies as well as formal theories of specific types of adverbial clauses. We also welcome research at the interfaces with semantics and other areas, as long as it contributes to the core question of the conference.

Abstracts should be submitted in PDF format to lukasz.jedrzejowski@uia.no, with all non-standard fonts embedded. Abstracts must not exceed two pages, including data. An additional third page may be used for references. Submissions should be in letter or A4 format, with 1-inch (2.5 cm) margins on all sides, single-spaced, and in a font no smaller than 11 pt. Abstracts must be anonymous. Please ensure that PDF files do not contain any identifying metadata. Each author may submit one individual and one joint abstract, or two joint abstracts.

Please submit abstracts to lukasz.jedrzejowski@uia.no no later than September 20, 2025.

Notification: 30 September 2025

For inquiries, please send an e-mail to lukasz.jedrzejowski@uia.no

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