

Construct relativization in East Semitic

J. Cale Johnson (Freie Universität Berlin, jcale@zedat.fu-berlin.de)

The Semitic construct state is a venerable institution, its use extending over more than four millennia in the various textual records that record its existence. Yet as we move through the history the Semitic languages, the syntactic contexts in which the construct state occurs, particularly vis-à-vis relativization, shift dramatically. Unlike well-known West Semitic languages like Hebrew or Arabic, the Old Babylonian dialect of Akkadian (East Semitic, present-day Iraq, ca. 1800–1600 BCE) exhibits a set of typological features that are often found in languages that make use of internally headed relatives. The Old Babylonian dialect has strictly SOV word order, a null pronoun and Wh-in-situ (conforming to the Harada-Kuroda-Cole Generalization and the discussion in Watanabe 1992; see Hiraiwa 2008). There is consequently no *prima facie* reason to exclude the possibility of internally headed relativization in Old Babylonian on typological grounds alone.

In a 2005 paper I suggested that Old Babylonian relative clauses in which the head of the relative was caught up in the construct state were best understood as internally headed relative clauses (IHRCs). Based on the inability of strong quantifiers to appear in the construct state in Old Babylonian as well as certain discourse constraints on anaphora, I went on to argue these IHRCs were semantically analogous to amount relatives as described in Grosu and Landman 1998. At the time, in line with Grosu and Landman, I assumed that amount relatives (ARs) and relatives out of existentials (ROEs) were semantically equivalent and that the AR semantics of construct relatives in Old Babylonian could be linked to the general restriction on determiners in the construct state (viz. as a definiteness effect on the head of an IHRC) in other branches of the Semitic family. In the few years since then ARs and ROEs have been differentiated more strongly (McNally 2008; 2009) and a definiteness contrast in ARs has emerged (Grosu 2009; Kotek forthcoming), allowing for a more principled link between indefiniteness/non-specificity and AR semantics, the central question in my 2005 paper.

In this paper I present a systematic description of ARs and ROEs in the *Altbabylonische Briefe* (AbB) corpus as well as a discussion of factive complementation in Old Babylonian and other Akkadian dialects (see Deutscher 2000). I argue that ARs and ROEs can be clearly differentiated in Old Babylonian and that the ARs (viz. the construct state relatives dealt with in my 2005 paper) are comparable to indirect and factive complements that are headed by a weakly quantified noun. The similarity between IHRCs and indirect/factive complements seems to be one of the most important features of IHRCs cross-linguistically and the paper concludes with an extended discussion of these similarities in Old Babylonian, contact clauses in non-standard English and Korean (Culy 1990; Doherty 2000; Kwon 2009).

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