

Relative clauses in Russian Sign Language vary a lot in terms of positions of the head and the relative signs, and have no specialized non-manuals

INTRO

- Relative clause (RC) – a dependent clause, connected to main clause (MC) by semantically and syntactically shared pivot constituent (the head)
- The head can be overtly realized inside RC (IHRC), external to RC (EHRC), in both inside and outside of RC (DHRC) or it can be covert (FRC)

METHODS

- 9 participants
- picture-based task
- 88 RCs with different syntactic roles of the head in MC and RC

RESULTS

Position of the head

EHRC (1)	IHRC (2)	DHRC (3)	FRC
45	16	11	10

Options for relative elements in RSL

- index sign IX agreeing with the head (1)
- sign KOTORYJ with the mouthing of Russian relative pronoun *kotoryj* (3;4); no agreement with the head
- KOTORYJ and IX frequently appear together (4)
- no overt relative signs (2)

Position of relative signs in RC

	IX	KOTORYJ (+IX)	none
RC-initial	19	27	42
RC-final	18	6	64

Relative signs of different types may be overtly realized in RC-initial, in RC-final or in **both** positions.

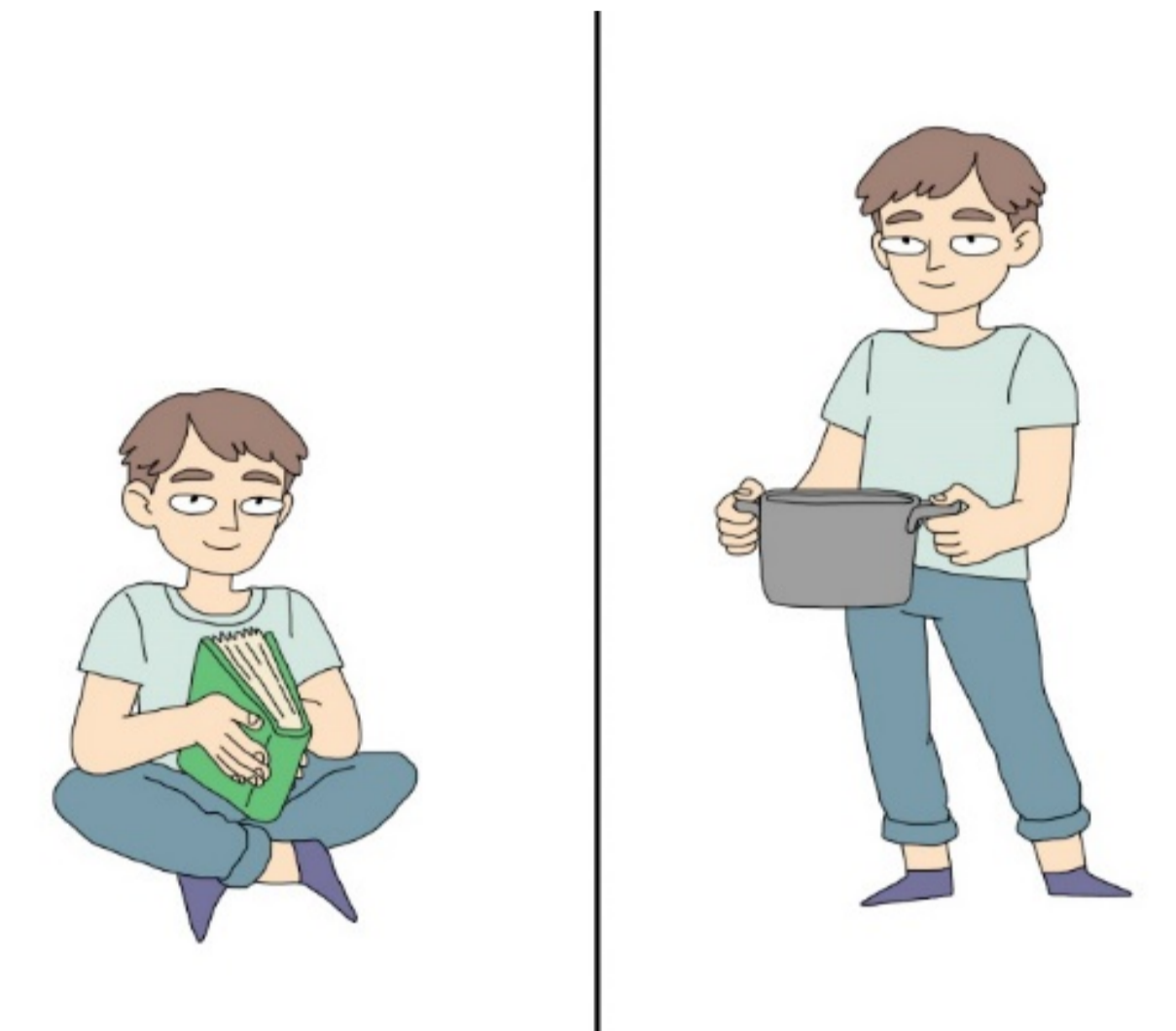
MC-doubling in relative constructions

Doubling of MC after sentence-final RC is found in 24 cases (4).

Non-manual markers

	eye blink	head leans/turns	raised eye brows	squints
RC		28		17
MC	77	34	28	

Almost all relative constructions are marked by NMM but none of the NMM is specialized for RC



Q1: "Which of the boys is reading a book?"
 A1: "The boy who is sitting is reading a book."
 (The head - subject in RC and MC)
 Q2: "Which of the boys do you like more?"
 A2: "I like the boy who is sitting/reading a book."
 (The head - subject in MC and object in RC)

EXAMPLES

- (1) $\text{DOG MORE BEAUTIFUL } \overset{\text{br}}{\text{IX}_3} \text{ BOY } \overset{\text{nod}}{\text{HUG}} \overset{\text{J}_{\text{EHRC}}}{\text{IX}_3}$
 'The girl that pets a cat is sitting.'
- (2) $\overset{\text{rhI}}{\text{IX}_1} \overset{\text{eb}}{\text{LIKE}} \overset{\text{eb}}{[\text{BALL GIRL SIT HOLD}]_{\text{IHRC}}}$
 'I like the girl that is holding the ball.'
- (3) $\text{IX}_1 \text{ MORE LIKE CAR } [\text{KOTORYJ CAR TURN.LEFT}]_{\text{DHRC}}$
 'I prefer the car that is turning left.'
- (4) $\overset{\text{br}}{\text{GIRL SIT}} [\text{KOTORYJ IX}_3 \text{ GIRL HOLD CAT PET IX}_3 \text{ KOTORYJ}]_{\text{DHRC}} \text{ SIT}$
 'The girl that pets a cat is sitting.'



Scan the code to watch the examples

DISCUSSION

- RC in RSL employ **all structurally possible positions of the head**
- No other SL allows such a **variability in the position and double exponence of the relative sign**
- Frequency of MC-doubling is a reflection of **grammaticalization processes** in relative constructions in RSL

RC in RSL fit the same patterns that are found in other spoken and SL but exhibit typologically unusual variability

