



Paratactic relative clauses in Sumerian


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Abstract: Using the interpretation and analysis of the passage Ur-Namma 28 1:10-13 as starting point, this paper argues that copular clauses in Sumerian may function as paratactic relative clauses in biclausal constructions. It also demonstrates that the choice that which participant of the copular clause will function as head is determined not by the syntactic but by the pragmatic function of the participants. In the concluding part, the paper contends that the grammatical construction used in the frequently discussed passage E-ana-tum 5 5:10–17 is the same as that of Ur-Namma 28 1:10-13. It shows that the oddity of the E-ana-tum passage is due to the phenomenon that the name E-ana-tum is used once as an expression referring to a person, the ruler of Lagaš, and once as an expression referring to his name.

Keywords: Sumerian grammar, copular clauses, left-dislocation, paratactic relative clauses, royal inscriptions

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1. Introduction¹

This paper aims to give an explanation for the structure of **ex. (1)** below:²

¹ This paper is a revised version of Zólyomi 2015, which itself is based on a talk given in Heidelberg in June 2014.

² Royal inscriptions are quoted with reference to their number in RIME (1 = Frayne 2007; 3/1 = Edzard 1997; 3/2 = Frayne 1997). P-numbers and Q-numbers refer to the catalogue-numbers of manuscripts and composite texts of the Cuneiform Digital Library Initiative Project (<https://www.cdli.ucla.edu>). Literary texts are quoted with reference to their designation and catalogue-number at the website of the Electronic Text Corpus of Sumerian Literature (<http://etcsl.orinst.ox.ac.uk/>). An electronic edition of all royal inscriptions mentioned in this paper can be found at the website of the Electronic Text Corpus of Sumerian Royal Inscriptions project (<http://oracc.museum.upenn.edu/etcsri/>).

In the Sumerian examples, the first line represents the utterance in standard graphemic transliteration; the second, a segmentation into morphemes; the third, a morpheme-by-morpheme glossing. Abbreviations used in the glosses: ~PF = reduplication expressing present-future tense; 3 = third person; A = agent (subject of a transitive verb); ABL = ablative case-marker or prefix; ABS = absolutive case-marker or prefix; COM = comitative case-marker or prefix; COP = copula; DAT = dative case-marker or prefix; DEM = demonstrative pronoun; FIN = finite-marker prefix; GEN = genitive case-marker; GN = geographical name; H = human; L1 = locative1 case-marker or prefix; L2 = locative2 case-marker or prefix; MID = middle prefix; NEG = negative prefix; NH = non-human; P = patient (object of a transitive verb); PC = predicate complement; PF = present-future or the marker of present-future; PL = plural; PT = preterit, or the marker of preterit; POSS = possessive enclitic or possessor; PT = preterit, or the marker of preterit; S = subject (of a transitive verb); SG = singular; SUB = subordinator suffix; SYN = syncopated verbal prefix; TERM = terminative case-marker or prefix; TL = tenseless; VEN = ventive prefix.

EX. 1. Ur-Namma 28 1:10-13 (Girsu, 21st c.) (RIME 3/2.1.1.28) (Q000952)

id ₂ -da, PC'S POSS [id=ak] PC'S POSS [canal=GEN]	^d nanna-gu ₂ -gal S [nannagugal=∅] S [GN=ABS]	mu-be ₂ ³ PC [mu=be=∅]=am-∅ PC [name=3.SG.NH.POSS=ABS]=COP-3.SG.S
id ₂ PC [id PC [canal	ki-sur-ra-kam, kisura=ak=∅]=am-∅ border=GEN=ABS]=COP-3.SG.S	mu-ba-al S ₄ mu- _{S11} n- _{S12} bal- _{S14} ∅ VEN-3.SG.H.A-dig-3.SG.P

Lit. “As for the canal, Nanna-gugal is its name, (it) is a border canal, he (= Ur-Namma) dug it.” = “He (= Ur-Namma) dug a canal, whose name is Nanna-gugal, (and) which is a border canal.” ■

Below are the translations given to this passage and the preceding clause by Th. Jacobsen, H. Steible, and D. Frayne. All three of them translate the word **id** “canal” as the object of the verb **bal** “to dig”, and consider the name of the canal (**Nanna-gugal**) as a kind of modifier of the word “canal”:⁴

“when he built the temple of Enlil, here dig the canal the name of which is ^dNanna-gú-gal as boundary-canal, ...”⁵

“... als er <den Tempel> des Enlil gebaut hatte, den Kanal mit Namen Nannagugal (‘Nanna (ist) Deichgraf’) - es ist ein Grenzkanal - gegraben.”

“Wörtlich ‘Des Kanals “Nanna (ist) der Deichgraf” sein Name’.”⁶

“when he built the temple of the god Enlil, dug the canal named ‘Nanna-gugal,’ the boundary canal.”⁷

The non-literal translation given to **ex. (1)** above also considers **id** as the object of **bal**, and its name is translated with an appositive relative clause containing a non-verbal predicate.

These are contextual translations: if you have the word “canal”, its name and the verb “to dig”, then the sentence should mean that someone digs a canal with a certain name. Interpreting the word **id** “canal” as the object of verb **bal** “to dig” appears, however, to be in disagreement with the grammatical structure of **ex. (1)**, where the word **id** is in the genitive and occupies a sentence-initial position. It is namely the left-dislocated possessor of the predicate complement (**mu** “name”) of the initial copular clause in **ex. (1)**; the subject of this clause is the name of the canal (**nanna-gugal**).

The first copular clause is followed by another one and by the clause whose finite verb is **bal** “to dig”. The subject of the second copular clause is expressed solely by the 3rd ps. sg. pronominal suffix on the copula (-∅), and is co-referential with the left-dislocated **id** “canal” of the initial

In the morphemic segmentation of the finite verbal forms, subscript “S + number” refers to the verbal slots as discussed in Zólyomi 2017, 77–90.

³ The word form **mu=be=∅=am-∅** (name=3.SG.NH.POSS=ABS=COP-3.SG.S) is written as **mu-be₂** until the end of the 3rd millennium BC. The use of the orthography **mu-be₂-em** starts only with Amar-Suen in the royal inscriptions; cf., e.g., Amar-Suen 10 1:12 (RIME 3/2.1.3.10) (Q000985).

⁴ For similar translations cf., e.g., PSD B, 11 (§2.1.2.1.); Horowitz 1998, 85; Woods 2008, 115 (ex. 35); Rey et al. 2016, 26.

⁵ Jacobsen 1960, 178.

⁶ Steible 1991, II, 131 and 132.

⁷ Frayne 1997, 64.

copular clause.⁸ Its predicate complement is the genitive construction **id kisura=ak** “border canal”.

I am aware of no explanation in the assyriological literature that would derive the usual translations of **ex. (1)** from its grammatical structure. The purpose of this paper is to provide an interpretation that is based on the grammatical analysis of the construction used in **ex. (1)**.

The paper is structured as follows: Section 2 discusses biclausal constructions which consist of a copular and a finite, non-copular clause, and the two clauses share a participant. It will be argued that the predicate complement of the copular clause functions as a relative clause in these constructions, its head being the shared participant. Section 3 will show that Sumerian copular biclausal constructions are paratactic constructions. The predicate of the construction’s copular clause functions as a paratactic relative clause. It contrasts with relative clauses of finite verbs which are formally marked as subordinate. Section 4 demonstrates that in copular biclausal constructions the choice that which participant of the copular clause will function as head is determined not by the syntactic but by the pragmatic function of the participants. The paper concludes with a summary of its main findings.

2. Copular biclausal constructions

Copular clauses in Sumerian are often used in a construction together with a finite, non-copular clause. In the following I will refer to this type of construction as copular biclausal construction. A typical example is **ex. (2)** below:

EX. 2. Gudea Cyl. A 8:10 = 13:26 (Girsu, 22nd c.) (ETCSL 2.1.7) (Q000377a)

Copular clause

li ^{n₁s}	u ₂	sikil	kur-ra-kam
_s [li=∅]	_{PC} [u	sikil-∅	kur=ak=∅]=am-∅
_s [juniper=ABS]	_{PC} [plant	pure-TL	mountain=GEN=ABS]=COP-3.SG.S

Matrix clause

izi-a	bi ₂ -si-si
izi= ² a	_{s₅} b- _{s₁₀} i- _{s₁₁} n- _{s₁₂} si~si- _{s₁₄} ∅
fire=L2.NH	3.SG.NH-L2-3.SG.H.A-fill~PL-3.SG.P

Lit. “The juniper is the pure plant of the mountains; he (= Gudea) put it onto the fire.”
= “He (= Gudea) put juniper, which is the pure plant of the mountains, onto the fire.” ■

Ex. (2) consists of two clauses. The initial clause is copular “The juniper is the pure plant of the mountains”. Its subject is the word **li** “juniper”, its predicate complement is the genitive construction **u sikil-∅ kur=ak** “the pure plant of the mountains”. Both its subject and its predicate complement are in the absolutive case. Its predicate is a 3rd ps. sg. enclitic copula: **=am-∅**. The second clause involves a finite non-copular verb: “He (= Gudea) put it (= the juniper) onto the fire.”

These two clauses could be used independently without any modification as simple sentences. The two clauses share a participant; the word **li** “juniper” functions as the subject in the first, while as the object in the second one.

⁸ For the most important characteristics of copular clauses in Sumerian, see Zólyomi 2014, 17–22 or Zólyomi 2017, 107–112.

Copular biclausal constructions are characterized by a conceptual asymmetry. The “main” assertion is related to the finite verb in the matrix clause; the predicate of the copular clause functions only to provide some additional information about the shared participant.

It is this conceptual asymmetry that is reflected in the translation of Edzard: “He threw into the fire (twigs of) juniper, pure plants of the mountain”.⁹ In Edzard’s translation the predicate complement functions as an attributive apposition to the word *li* “juniper”. The non-literal translation of *ex. (2)* above renders it as an appositive relative clause.

This conceptual asymmetry may also reveal itself in syntax. Consider *exx. (3)* and *(4)* below. Both examples contain subordinate clauses depending on a verb of oath. And in both examples one of the subordinate clauses is a copular clause.

EX. 3. NG 123 1–8 (Girsu, 21st c.) (P111431)

ku-li-sag ₉ -ge ₂ ,	^m ama-šu-ḫal-bi	geme ₂	i ₃ -me-a,
kulisag=e	_S [amašuḫalbi=∅]	_{PC} [geme=∅]	_{S2} ⁱ - _{S12} me- _{S14} ∅- _{S15} 'a
PN1=ERG	_S [PN2=ABS]	_{PC} [maiden=ABS]	FIN-COP-3.SG.S-SUB

na-ba-ra-sa₁₀-a,
{S1}nu-{S5}ba-_{S9}ta-_{S11}n-_{S12}sa-_{S14}∅-_{S15}'a
 NEG-MID-ABL-3.SG.H.A-buy-3.SG.P-SUB

i-ta-e ₃ -a,	nu-na-šum ₂ -ma,
itaea=ra	_{S1} nu- _{S6} nn- _{S7} a- _{S11} n- _{S12} šum- _{S14} ∅- _{S15} 'a
PN3=DAT.H	NEG-3.SG.H-DAT-3.SG.H.A-give-3.SG.P-SUB

ba-da-ṛzah ₃ ¹ -a-kam,	e ₂	nin-ṛmar ¹ -ki-ka,
_{S5} ba- _{S8} da- _{S12} zah- _{S14} ∅- _{S15} 'a=ak=am-∅ ¹⁰	e	ninmarki=ak='a
MID-COM-disappear-3.SG.S-SUB=GEN=COP-33.SG.S house		DN=GEN=L1

nam-erim ₂ -be ₂	in-kud
namerim=be=∅	_{S2} ⁱ - _{S11} n- _{S12} kud- _{S14} ∅
oath=3.SG.NH.POSS=ABS	FIN-3.SG.H.A-cut-3.SG.P

“In the temple in Ninmarki, Kuli-sag took the affirmatory oath that Ama-šuhalbi was a female slave, that he did not sell her, that he did not give her to Itaea, and that she did run away.” ■

EX. 4. NATN 920 6-9 (Nippur, 21st c.) (P121617)

lu ₂ -giri ₁₇ -zal,	lu ₂ -dinjir-ra	šeš	a-tu-me,
_S [lugirizal	_S [ludinjirak=∅]	_{PC} [šeš	atu=ak=∅]=me-eš
_S [PN1	PN2=ABS]	_{PC} [brother	PN3=GEN=ABS]=COP-3.PL.S

nu-u₃-ub-gi₄-gi₄-de₃-ša,
{S1}nu-{S2}ⁱ-_{S5}b-_{S10}(i)>∅-_{S12}gi~gi-_{S13}ed-_{S14}eš-_{S15}'a=ak
 NEG-FIN-3.SG.NH-L2.SYN-return~PF-PF-3.PL.S-SUB=GEN

⁹ Edzard 1997, 74.

¹⁰ Following the finite verb, the enclitic copula functions here as the marker of polarity focus; see Zólyomi 2014, 169–172.

mu	lugal-be ₂	in-pad ₃
mu	lugal=ak=be=∅	s ₂ i ⁻ _{s11} n ⁻ _{s12} pad ⁻ _{s14} ∅
name	king=GEN=POSS.3.SG.NH=ABS	FIN-3.SG.H.A-call-3.SG.P

“He (= Atu) swore by the king’s name that Lu-girizal (and) Lu-diņira, who are the brothers of Atu, will not contest it (= Atu’s adoption of a slave and appointment as his heir) (lit. “will not come back to it”).” ■

In **ex. (3)** the copular clause is:

s[amašuhalbi=∅] _{PC}[geme=∅] i-me-∅-’a

“Ama-šuhalbi is a female slave”

In **ex. (4)** it is:

s[lugirizal ludiņirak=∅] _{PC}[šeš atu=ak=∅]=me-eš

“Lu-girizal (and) Lu-diņira are the brothers of Atu”

The two copular clauses differ in their form, which in turn reflects a difference in their function. The copular clause in **ex. (3)** is one of the four statements confirmed by Kuli-sag in the oath. Its predicate is an independent, finite copular verb, which is formally marked as subordinate by the suffix -/’a/ just like the other three finite verbs in the oath.¹¹

The predicate is an enclitic copula in the copular clause of **ex. (4)**. It is formally therefore not subordinate, unlike the second, non-copular verb in the oath, which is formally marked as subordinate by the suffix -/’a/. The copular clause in **ex. (4)** is clearly not a statement to be confirmed by the oath, rather its predicate provides some additional information about Lu-girizal and Lu-diņira, namely, that they are the brothers of the oath-taker.

In other words, **ex. (4)** may not be interpreted as saying “Atu swore by the king’s name that Lu-girizal (and) Lu-diņira are the brothers of Atu, and that they will not contest it.” The oath relates only to the statement that the two persons will not contest the adoption, but not to the statement that they are the brothers of Atu. The copular clause of this example is therefore subordinated only conceptually but not formally to the following clause.

Ex. (4) demonstrates clearly that the predicate of the copular clause is conceptually subordinate to that of the matrix clause in copular biclausal constructions, so translations like “He put juniper, which is the pure plant of the mountains, onto the fire” are justified.

3. Paratactic relative clauses

How are the copular biclausal constructions analysed in the earlier sumerological literature? Well, obviously not as biclausal constructions. In her grammar of Sumerian, M.-L. Thomsen clearly means examples like **ex. (2)** above when stating:

“The enclitic copula ... which can occur at the end of the [nominal] chain replaces, so to say, the appropriate case element.”¹²

What is meant is that one is missing the expected ergative case-marker in constructions like **ex. (5)** below.

¹¹ The independent and the enclitic copula have a complementary distribution in Sumerian. See Zólyomi 2014, 19–20 or Zólyomi 2017, 110 about the morphosyntactic environments that determine which form is used.

¹² Thomsen 1984, 53.

EX. 5. Gudea Cyl. A 1:12 (Girsu, 22nd c.) (ETCSL 2.1.7) (Q000377a)

ensi ₂	lu ₂	neštug ₃	daṅal-kam
_s [ensik=∅]	_{pc} [lu	neštug	daṅal-∅=ak=∅]=am-∅
_s [ruler=ABS]	_{pc} [man	ear	wide-TL=GEN=ABS]=COP-3.SG.S
neštug ₃	i ₃ -ṅa ₂ -ṅa ₂		
neštug=∅	_{s2} i- _{s12} ṅa~ṅa- _{s14} e		
ear=ABS	FIN-put~pf-3.SG.A		

Lit. “The ruler is a man of wide ears, he is going to apply his wisdom.” = “Being a man of wide wisdom, the ruler will act wisely.” ■

Without the copula the first part of **ex. (5)** should be like the hypothetical **ex. (6)**:

EX. 6.

*ensik	lu	[neštug daṅal-∅=ak]=e
ruler	man	[ear wide-TL=GEN]=ERG

“the ruler, a man of wide ears ...” ■

Similar views are expressed by F. Karahashi who states:

*“When the Sumerian particle -àm is attached to a constituent, it supersedes ordinary case-marking In other words, attachment of this particle causes neutralization of these case particles, as Falkenstein observed”*¹³

In fact, Falkenstein’s original description does more justice to the real character of the construction than that of Thomsen’s or Karahashi’s. His explanation for the apparent lack of case-markers was that *“der ursprüngliche Satzcharacter die Setzung von Kasuszeichen verhindert”*,¹⁴ and in another place of his seminal work on the grammar of the Gudea texts he states that

“Sätze mit der enklitischen Kurzform der Kopula ..., die von Haus aus selbständig sind, können ... als Glieder des nominalen Satzteils verwandt werden”.¹⁵

Both Thomsen’s and Karahashi’s formulation appear to miss the main characteristic of these constructions: they are biclausal. They expect case-markers where there should be no case-markers. The words which they expect to be case-marked are the predicate complements of a copular clause and not the constituent of the matrix clause with the finite non-copular verb.

A. Jagersma was the first who labelled the copular clause of the biclausal constructions corresponding to their function. He calls them copular relative clauses, but states that they *“are never followed by a phrase-final clitic”*.¹⁶

By saying this, he contrasts them with the relative clauses of non-copular verbs, which are case-marked according to the function of their heads as in **ex. (7)** below. In Sumerian, the finite relative clause becomes the modifier of the noun that functions as the head of the relative clause.

¹³ Karahashi 2008, 89.

¹⁴ Falkenstein 1950, 32.

¹⁵ Falkenstein 1950, 32 (§89d).

¹⁶ Jagersma 2010, 706.

EX. 7. Gudea Cyl. A 7:11-12 (Girsu, 22nd c.) (ETCSL 2.1.7) (Q000377a)

inim	ᵈnanše-e	mu-na-dug ₄ -ga-aš,
inim	[nanše=e	_{S4} mu- _{S6} nn- _{S7} a- _{S11} n- _{S12} dug- _{S14} ø- _{S15} 'a]=še
word	[DN=ERG	VEN-3.SG.H-DAT-3.SG.H.A-speak-3.SG.P-SUB]=TERM
saṅ	sig	ba-ši-ṅar
saṅ	sig-ø=ø	_{S5} ba- _{S9} ši- _{S11} n- _{S12} ṅar- _{S14} ø
head	low-TL=ABS	MID-TERM-3.SG.H.A-put-3.SG.P

Lit. “He (= Gudea) set a low head to the words that Nanše told him.” = “He (= Gudea) accepted what Nanše told him.” ■

In *ex. (7)* above, the relative clause **nanše=e mu-nn-a-n-dug-ø'a** “that Nanše told him” structurally is the modifier of the word **inim** “word” that functions as its head. As the relative clause syntactically is the modifier of its head, the case-marker that indicates the function of the head noun in the matrix clause follows the relative clause.

The idiom **sag sig — ṅar** “to lower the head” case-marks the participant before which/whom one lowers the head with the terminative, consequently here the relative clause is followed by a terminative case-marker. The relative clause is syntactically subordinate, so its finite verb contains a subordinate suffix *-/a/*.¹⁷

Unfortunately, Jagersma’s (2010) grammar does not provide an explanation of the apparent lack of the phrase-final clitic in copular relative clauses either.

There exists thus a construction in Sumerian that involves two clauses; both could be used independently as a simple, non-subordinate clause. The predicate of the first, copular clause of these constructions, in fact, functions as a relative clause modifying the participant shared by the two clauses of the construction. This construction differs from sentences involving a non-copular relative clause, in which the relative clause is marked formally subordinate with a subordinate suffix *-/a/*. The copular biclausal constructions thus contrast with sentences involving a non-copular relative clause in the lack of formally marked syntactic subordination. In other words, the copular clause of a copular biclausal construction stands not in a subordinate but in a *paratactic* relation with its matrix clause.

In an article about relative clause formation in African languages, T. Kuteva and B. Comrie recognize a relativization strategy that is very similar to the one just suggested for Sumerian. They say:

*“The paratactic relativization strategy involves cases where the ‘relative’ clause contains the full-fledged head and is the same as an unmarked simple (declarative) clause; the relative and main clauses are only very loosely joined together.”*¹⁸

They refer to sentences like *ex. (8)* below as a possible English parallel:

EX. 8.

“That man just passed by us, he introduced me to the Chancellor of the University yesterday.” ■

This strategy is attested in Amele (spoken in Papua New Guinea):

¹⁷ See Zólyomi 2017, 96–100 for relative clauses in Sumerian.

¹⁸ Kuteva – Comrie 2005, 212.

EX. 9.¹⁹

mel	mala	heje	on
boy	chicken	illicit	take.3.SG.S.REM.PAST
((mel)	eu)	busali	nu-i-a
boy	that	run away	go-3.SG.S-TOD.PAST

Lit. “The boy stole the chicken; (that boy) ran away. = “The boy that stole the chicken ran away.” ■

They describe the example as follows:

“*mel* ‘boy’ is the ‘relativized’ noun in the ‘relative’ clause. This nominal can optionally be referred to in the following ‘matrix’ clause either by the demonstrative *eu* ‘that’ or, if clarification is needed, *mel eu* ‘boy that’. What links the two clauses is the rising intonation at the end of the first clause. This indicates that it is not a final clause and is in either a subordinate or coordinate relationship with the following clause.”²⁰

Sumerian copular biclausal constructions appear to be a manifestation of the paratactic relativization strategy as defined by Kuteva and Comrie. The initial copular clause contains the constituent that functions as the head of the relative clause, and the clause is formally the same as a simple non-subordinate copular clause. The two clauses share a participant and the predicate complement of the initial copular clause is interpreted as the modifier of the shared participant.²¹

4. The head of the paratactic relative clauses

What is the relevance of recognizing the existence of paratactic relativization in Sumerian to the interpretation and analysis of **ex. (1)**? This is the subject of the concluding part of the paper.

In the copular biclausal constructions discussed so far, the copular clause consisted of only a subject and a predicate complement. In **ex. (2)**, for example, the subject is the word **li** “juniper”, and the predicate complement attributes a property to it. It is therefore natural that the subject functions as the head of the paratactic relative clause. But copular clauses may have additional constituents. Consider, for example, **ex. (10)** below, another copular clause about the name of something.

EX. 10. Ur-Namma 19 2:7-8 (Ur, 21st c.) (RIME 3/2.1.1.19) (Q000946)

eg ₂ -ba	a-ba- ^d nanna-gin ₇ ,
PC'S POSS [eg=be=ak]	S [aba=∅ nanna=gin=∅]
PC'S POSS [levee=DEM=GEN]	S [who=ABS DN=EQU=ABS]

mu-be₂
 PC [mu=be=∅]=am-∅
 PC [name=3.SG.NH.POSS=ABS]=COP-3.SG.S

“As for that levee, ‘Who-is-like-Nanna?’ is its name.” ■

In this example, the word **eg** = “levee”, the possessor of the predicate complement (= **mu** “name”) is left-dislocated and occupies a sentence-initial position in front of the subject, the name of the

¹⁹ Kuteva – Comrie, 2005, 212, **ex. 9**. The abbreviations are REM.PAST = remote past, TOD.PAST = today past.

²⁰ Kuteva – Comrie 2005, 213.

²¹ See Deutscher 2000 about parataxis in Akkadian, the other main language of ancient Mesopotamia. Deutscher also discusses parataxis in Sumerian, although not in relation to copular relative clauses (2000, 153–155).

levee. The left-dislocated possessor functions as the topic of the clause,²² i.e. the clause will be construed as being about the possessor; as the translation of **ex. (10)** indicates.

The structure of **ex. (10)** is exactly the same as the structure of the initial copular clause in **ex. (1)**. **Ex. (1)** too starts with a left-dislocated possessor (**id** = “canal”). One may wonder what happens when a copular clause similar to **ex. (10)** will be part of a copular biclausal construction and function as paratactic relative clause? In particular, which of its constituents will function as the head of the relative clause, the subject or the left-dislocated possessor?

The customary translations of **ex. (1)** indicate that the answer to this question is the left-dislocated possessor. **Ex. (1)** makes sense only if one assumes that the left-dislocated possessor of the predicate complement, i.e., the word **id** “canal” will function as the head. This finding has important consequences for the interpretation of copular biclausal constructions. It suggests that choice of the head is determined not by the syntactic but by the pragmatic function of the participants.

In **ex. (2)** the subject and the topic of the initial copular clause are the same participant. But in **ex. (1)** (and also in **ex. [11]** below) the participants functioning as the subject and the topic are different.²³ In these examples the head of the paratactic copular relative clause will be the participant that functions as the topic of the copular clause, i.e., the left-dislocated possessor of the predicate complement.

The meaning of **ex. (1)** thus follows from the way paratactic copular relative clauses select their head. The head of these constructions will be the participant that functions as the topic of the copular clause.

The passage in **ex. (1)** is not the only one in which the head of the paratactic copular relative clause is a left-dislocated possessor. The same construction occurs in a well-known and frequently discussed passage of the inscription E-ana-tum 5, see **ex. (11)** below. Because of its oddity G. Marchesi suggested that text is corrupt and should be emended.²⁴ But there is no need for emendation. In **ex. (11)** too, it is the left-dislocated possessor of the predicate complement that is interpreted as the head of the paratactic relative clause “E-ana-tum, whose own name is E-ana-tum”.

EX. 11. E-ana-tum 5 5:10-17 (Girsu, 25th c.) (RIME 1.9.3.5) (Q001057)

e ₂ -an-na-tum ₂ -ma, PC'S POSS[eanatum=ak] PC'S POSS[RN=GEN]	e ₂ -an-na-tum ₂ , S[eanatum=∅] S[RN=ABS]	mu PC[mu PC[name	ʽu ₂ -rum-ma-ne ₂ ʽ, urum=ane=∅]=am-∅] own=3.SG.H.POSS=ABS]=COP-3.SG.S]
mu PC[mu PC[name	ʽGIR ₃ ʽ. GIR ₃ -ne ₂ , ...=ane=∅] ...=3.SG.H.POSS=ABS]	ʽlum-ma-aʽ, S[luma=∅]=am-∅25 ²⁵ S[PN=ABS]=COP-3.SG.S]	

²² See Zólyomi 2017, 53–55 on left-dislocated genitive constructions in Sumerian.

²³ For a typology of Sumerian copular clauses in terms of their information structure, see Zólyomi 2014, 27–55.

²⁴ Marchesi 2006, 123.

²⁵ It follows from the analysis presented here that the A sign of **lum-ma-a** must represent a writing for the 3rd ps. sg. enclitic copula; superseding my former suggestion in Zólyomi 2010. For previous suggestions see Marchesi 2006, 22⁸⁶ and 124.

Note that also in Iri-ka-gina 1 (Girsu, 24th c.) (RIME 1.9.9.1) (Q001124) the verbal form is written differently in the various exemplars: as **e-me-am₆** in AO 3149 7:11 (P222608) but as **e-me-a** in AO 3278 7:28 (P222607).

^d nin- ^r ñir ₂ ¹ -su ₂ - ^r ra ¹ ,	id ₅	gibil,	mu-na-dun
ninñirsuk=ra	id	gibil-∅=∅	_{S4} mu- _{S6} nn- _{S7} a- _{S11} n- _{S12} dun- _{S14} ∅
DN=DAT.H	canal	new-TL=ABS	VEN-3.SG.H-DAT-3.SG.H.A-dig-SG.H.P

“(In those days), E-ana-tum, whose own name is E-ana-tum, (but) whose ... name is Luma, dug a new canal for Ninñirsu.” ■

The oddity of this example is due to the fact that the person whose name is specified by the subject is referred to by the very same name in the left-dislocated possessor of the predicate. Although the word **e₂-an-na-tum₂** occurs twice in the initial copular clause of **ex. (11)**, the referents of the two words are different. The left-dislocated possessor refers to the *person* called E-ana-tum, ruler of Lagaš, while the subject refers to the *name* “E-ana-tum”.

The reason for this odd construction is, however, clear: the initial copular clause contrasts with the subsequent one, the former gives E-ana-tum’s ordinary name, while the latter gives another name (of unknown nature) of his.

Ex. (1) and **ex. (11)** are constructions involving more than one paratactic copular relative clauses. In both of them a clause with a finite non-copular verb is preceded by two copular clauses, both of which function as paratactic relative clause.

In **ex. (1)** the head of the paratactic copular relative clauses is the word **id** “canal”. This participant functions as the left-dislocated possessor of the word **mu** “name” in the first copular clause, as the subject in the second copular clause, and as object of the verb **bal** “to dig” in the third, non-copular clause.

In **ex. (11)** the head of the paratactic copular relative clauses is the word **eanatum** referring to the person. This participant functions as the left-dislocated possessor of the expression **mu urum** “own name” in the first copular clause, as the possessor of the obscure expression **mu GIR3.GIR3** “... name” in the second copular clause, and as the agent of the verb **dun** “to dig” in the third, non-copular clause.

5. Summary

The main findings of this paper may be summarized as follows:

1. Copular clauses may function as paratactic relative clauses in copular biclausal constructions in Sumerian.
2. In these constructions the head of the paratactic relative clause is the topic of the copular clause, which may be either the subject of the copular clause (**exx. [2], [4], and [5]**) or the left-dislocated possessor of the predicate complement (**exx. [1] and [11]**).

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