

## ON (DIS)AGREEMENT IN FRENCH PSEUDO-RELATIVES

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## 1. Background

- ◆ We refer to the bolded NP that precedes the clause introduced by *qui* in (1) as the “antecedent” of the pseudo-relative.
- (1) *On a découvert [Guy qui dormait dans une grange abandonnée].*  
 they have discovered Guy QUI was-sleeping in a barn abandoned  
 ‘They found Guy sleeping in an abandoned barn.’
- ◆ The antecedent of a pseudo-relative can be cliticized (2a) and it can undergo “postposing” (2b).
- (2) a. *On l’a découvert [qui dormait dans une grange abandonnée].*  
 they him-have discovered QUI was-sleeping in a barn abandoned  
 ‘They found him sleeping in an abandoned barn.’
- b. *On a découvert [qui dormait dans une grange abandonnée]*  
 they have discovered QUI was-sleeping in a barn abandoned  
*le terroriste le plus recherché de toute la planète*  
 the terrorist the most sought-after of all the planet  
 ‘They discovered the world’s most wanted terrorist sleeping in an abandoned barn.’
- ◆ Pseudo-relatives are subject to what looks like selectional restrictions imposed by the verb in the main clause.
- (3) a. *Je l’ai vu qui ennuyait sa sœur.*  
 I him-have seen QUI was-annoying his sister
- b. \**Je l’ai enguélé qui ennuyait sa sœur.*  
 I him-have yelled-at QUI was-annoying his sister
- (4) ***What silent category occupies the subject position inside the qui-clause: PRO (control), pro (prolepsis), or a silent copy of the antecedent (NP Raising)?***
- ◆ Main verbs that are incompatible with a pseudo-relative are also incompatible with a depictive adjective small clause.
- (5) a. *J’ai vu/\*aidé Marie qui s’inquiétait.*  
 I-have seen/helped Marie QUI was-worrying
- b. *J’ai vu/\*aidé Marie inquiète/en difficulté/perchée sur un rocher.*  
 I-have seen/helped Marie worried/in trouble/perched on a rock

- (6) *J'ai vu Paul déprimé et Justine qui essayait*  
 I-have seen Paul depressed and Justine QUI was-trying  
*de lui remonter le moral.*  
 of him raise-INF the morale  
 'I saw Paul depressed and Justine trying to cheer him up.'
- (7) Cinque's (1995) three options for Italian PRs:  
 a. Small clause complement to V  
*Ho [V'visto [SC Mario [che correva]]]*  
 have seen Mario QUI was-running  
 'I saw Mario running.'  
 b. Small clause adjunct within NP  
*Ho [V'visto [NP [NP Mario] [SC PRO [che correva]]]]]*  
 c. Small clause adjunct within VP  
*Ho [VP [V'visto Mario] [SC PRO [che correva]]]*
- (8) Casalicchio's (2016) structure for all Italian PRs:  
 $SC=ForceP[+EPP] [Maria_i che \dots TP[pro_i canta \nu P[(pro_i) (canta)]]]$   
 Maria QUI sing
- ◆ **Our Goal:** to explore the possibility that the antecedent of a pseudo-relative is first merged as the subject of the *qui* clause and subsequently undergoes internal merge to end up in the main clause.
2. **What "special" *qui* tells us about French pseudo-relatives**
- ◆ Koopman and Sportiche (2014) call "special *qui*" the type of *qui* found in cases of long-distance subject wh-extraction.
- (9) *Que crois-tu qui va lui arriver ?*  
 what believe-you QUI is-going to-him to-happen  
 'What do you think is going to happen to him/her?'
- ◆ They argue that the same *qui* is found in pseudo-relatives.
- (10) *J'ai entendu le clairon qui sonnait la retraite.*  
 I-have heard the bugle QUI was-sounding the retreat  
 'I heard the bugle sounding the retreat.'
- (11) a. *Que crois-tu [PRSC (que) [CPrel qui [e] va lui arriver]] ?*  
 b. *J'ai entendu [PRSC le clairon [CPrel qui [e] sonnait la retraite]] ?*

- (12) a. *(Ces fleurs), je les ai découvertes qui*  
 these flowers I them have discovered.FEM.PL QUI  
*poussaient sur une tombe.*  
 were-growing on a grave
- b. *Je l'ai entendu qui se faisait huer.*  
 I him-have heard QUI was-getting boo- INF  
 'I heard him getting booed.'

◆ The antecedent undergoes A-movement in the main clause when it is passivized (13a). A reciprocal antecedent gets bound by the main clause subject (13b). The antecedent can be separated from the *qui*-clause by adverbial expressions that modify the main predicate (13c-d).

- (13) a. *Le suspect a été vu qui volait une voiture.*  
 the suspect has been seen QUI was-stealing a car  
 'The suspect was seen stealing a car.'
- b. *[Eric et Philippe]<sub>i</sub> se sont imaginés [l'un l'autre]<sub>i</sub>*  
 Eric and Philippe SE are imagined the-one the-other  
*qui embrassaient Sylvie.*  
 QUI were-kissing Sylvie  
 'Eric and Phillippe imagined each other kissing Sylvie.'
- c. *Elle regardait Paul avec consternation qui buvait sa dernière bière.*  
 she watched Paul with consternation QUI was-drinking her last beer  
 'She watched Paul with dismay drinking her last beer.'
- d. *J'entendais le spectre de plus en plus distinctement*  
 I-heard the ghost from more to more distinctly  
*qui me hélait de sa voix d'outre-tombe.*  
 QUI me called-out of his voice from-beyond-grave  
 'I heard the ghost more and more distinctly calling me with his  
 otherworldly voice.'

◆ Idiomatic readings are retained under raising but not control:

- (14) a. The cat is likely to be out of the bag. (idiomatic reading OK)  
 b. The cat is eager PRO to be out of the bag. (\*idiomatic reading)

◆ Idiomatic readings that encompass the antecedent of a pseudo-relatives are retained.

- (15) *J'ai senti la moutarde qui me montait au nez.*  
 I-have felt the mustard QUI to-me rose to-the nose  
 'I felt my blood boil.'

- ◆ There is a well-known subject-object asymmetry in French pseudo-relatives.
- (16) a. *J'ai entendu Macron qui se faisait huer (par les Gilets Jaunes).*  
 I-have heard Macron QUI SE made boo-INF by the Yellow Vests  
 'I heard Macron getting booed by the Yellow Vests.'
- b. \**J'ai entendu Macron que les Gilets Jaunes huaiant.*  
 I-have heard Macron QUI the Yellow Vests were-booing

(17) Classic (downward) Agree (Chomsky 2000)

$\alpha$  (a probe) undergoes Agree with  $\beta$  (a goal) iff

- a.  $\alpha$  carries at least one unvalued feature and  $\beta$  carries a matching valued feature;
- b.  $\alpha$  c-commands  $\beta$ ;
- c.  $\beta$  is the closest goal to  $\alpha$ .

### 3. (Dis)agreement

- ◆ The Inactivity Condition has consequences for A-movement in subject-to-subject raising constructions.

- (18) a. *Sylvie<sub>i</sub> semble [ti avoir compris].*  
 Sylvie seems to-have understood
- b. \**Sylvie<sub>i</sub> semble (que) [ti a compris.]*  
 Sylvie seems (that) has understood

- ◆ Guasti (1988)  $\Rightarrow$  Most speakers find PRs problematic if the antecedent is in the first or second person.

- (19) a. *Pierre le/les voit qui parle/parlent à Jean.*  
 Pierre him/them sees QUI talk.3P-SING/3P-PL to Jean  
 'Pierre sees him/them talking to Jean.'
- b. \**Pierre me/nous voit qui parle/parlons à Jean.*  
 Pierre me/us sees QUI talk.1P-SING/1P-PL to Jean  
 'Pierre sees me/us talking to Jean.'
- c. \**Pierre te/vous voit qui parles/parlez à Jean.*  
 Pierre you/y'all sees QUI talk.2P-SING/2P-PL to Jean  
 'Pierre sees you/you guys talking to Jean.'

- ◆ Not entirely correct. A more accurate generalization is that the degree of acceptability of non-third-person antecedents correlates with the degree of syncretism exhibited by the pseudo-relative verbal morphology with respect to the unmarked third person form of the verb.

(20) *Verbal agreement paradigm in the French imparfait (simple past)*

je (I)		
tu (you.SG)	[aRive]	Pers.: default; Num.: SG/PL
il/elle (he/she)		
ils/elles (they.MASC/they.FEM)		
nous (we)	[aRivjõ]	Pers.: 1; Num.: PL
vous (you.PL)	[aRivje]	Pers.: 2; Num.: PL

- ◆ Pseudo-relatives are widely accepted only when their verbal morphology encodes default agreement and rejected otherwise.

- (21) a. (?)*Elle m'a vu qui [aRive].*  
 she me-has seen QUI arrived.DFLT-SG/PL  
 'She saw me arriving.'
- b. (?)*Elle t'a vu qui [aRive].*  
 she you.SG-has seen QUI arrived.DFLT-SG/PL  
 'She saw you arriving.'
- c. ?\**Elle nous a vus qui [aRivjõ].*  
 she us has seen QUI arrived.1P-PL  
 'She saw us arriving.'
- d. ?\**Elle vous a vus qui [aRivje].*  
 she you.PL has seen QUI arrived.2P-PL  
 'She saw you guys arriving.'

- ◆ Feature-conflict resolution in (non-standard) literary styles:

- (22) a. %...*je vous ai vus qui entraient dans la cathédrale...*  
 I y'all have seen QUI were-entering.3P-PL into the cathedral  
 'I saw you guys going into the cathedral.'  
 (Place rouge, Dominique Fernandez, Editions Grasset & Fasquelle, 2008)
- b. %*Je vous ai entendus qui remuaient là-haut...*  
 I y'all have heard QUI were-moving there-up  
 'I heard you guys moving up there.'  
 (Le gaz mortel, Hercule Valjean, Bibliothèque électronique du Québec,  
 Volume 708)
- c. %...*ils nous ont vus qui tenaient le mur*  
 they us have seen QUI were-holding the wall  
*et tuaient le temps...*  
 and were- killing the time  
 'They saw us sitting on our thumbs and killing time...'  
 (Ali le magnifique, Paul Smaïl, Editions Denoël, 2001)

van Urk (2015) ⇒ The properties of A-movement are the properties of movement resulting from the interaction of a  $\phi$ -probe with its goal, as opposed to the properties of particular syntactic positions.

#### 4. Questions for future research

- ◆ Pseudo-relatives behave like islands with respect to object wh-extraction, which raises the question of how the *qui*-clause subject can undergo A-movement to end up in the main clause.
- (23) a. \**la fille que je l'ai vu qui embrassait* (Kayne 1975: 129)  
           the girl who I him-have seen QUI was-kissing  
           ‘the girl who I saw him kissing’
- b. \**Quelle sonate as-tu entendu Pierre qui jouait ?* (Ruwet 1982: 107)  
           which sonata have-you heard Pierre QUI was-playing  
           ‘Which sonata did you hear Pierre playing?’
- ◆ Can the conclusions reached with respect to French pseudo-relatives be extended to other Romance languages? If it can be shown that they too exhibit signs of underspecification for person in their pseudo-relatives, then the answer is likely yes. If not, a unified analysis of Romance pseudo-relatives may not be possible.

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