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] le terroriste le plus recherché de toute la planète
they have discovered QUI was-sleeping in a barn abandoned 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 enguelé 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
I-have seen/helped Marie worried/in trouble/perched on a rock
(6) *J’ai vu Paul déprimé et Justine qui essayait de lui remonter le moral.*
I have seen Paul depressed and Justine QUI was-trying 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*

\[ \text{Ho} \left[ V^\prime \text{visto} \left[ SC \text{Mario} \left[ \text{che correva} \right] \right] \right] \]

have seen Mario QUI was-running
‘I saw Mario running.’

b. *Small clause adjunct within NP*

\[ \text{Ho} \left[ V^\prime \text{visto} \left[ NP \left[ NP \text{Mario} \right] SC \text{PRO} \left[ \text{che correva} \right] \right] \right] \]

c. *Small clause adjunct within VP*

\[ \text{Ho} \left[ VP \left[ V^\prime \text{visto} \text{Mario} \right] SC \text{PRO} \left[ \text{che correva} \right] \right] \]

(8) Casalicchio’s (2016) structure for all Italian PRs:

\[ SC=\text{ForceP}^{+\text{EPP}} \left[ \text{Maria} \left[ \text{che ... TP} \left[ \text{pro; canta} \right] \text{vP} \left[ \left( \text{proi; (canta)} \right) \right] \right] \right] \]

\[ \text{Maria} \text{QUI sing} \]

♦ 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 \left[ PRSC (que) \left[ CPrel qui [e] va lui arriver \right] \right] ?*
b. *J’ai entendu \left[ PRSC le clairon \left[ CPrel qui [e] sonnait la retraite \right] \right] ?*
(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]i se sont imaginés [l’un l’autre]i; Eric and Philippe SE are imagined the-one the-other qui embrassaient Sylvie. QUI were-kissing Sylvie ‘Eric and Phillipe imagined each other kissing Sylvie.’
	
c. Elle regardait Paul avec consternation qui buvait sa dernière bière. she watched Paul with dismay 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.  
  \[ J'\text{ai entendu Macron qui se faisait huer (par les Gilets Jaunes).} \]
  I have heard Macron QUI SE made boo-INF by the Yellow Vests
  ‘I heard Macron getting booed by the Yellow Vests.’

b.  
  \[ *J'\text{ai entendu Macron que les Gilets Jaunes huaient.} \]
  I have heard Macron QUI the Yellow Vests were-booinng

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

\[ \alpha \text{ (a probe) undergoes Agree with } \beta \text{ (a goal) iff} \]
\[ \begin{align*}
  \alpha & \text{ carries at least one unvalued feature and } \beta \text{ carries a matching valued feature;} \\
  \beta & \text{ c-commands } \beta; \\
  \beta & \text{ is the closest goal to } \alpha.
\end{align*} \]

3.  (Dis)agreement

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

(18) a.  
  \[ Sylvie \text{ semble } [t_i \text{ avoir compris}.] \]
  Sylvie seems to-have understood

b.  
  \[ *Sylvie \text{ semble (que) } [t_i a \text{ compris}.] \]
  Sylvie seems (that) has understood

♦ Guasti (1988) ⇒ 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)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Person</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Morphology</th>
<th>Pronunciation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>je (I)</td>
<td>(SG)</td>
<td>[aRive]</td>
<td>Pers.: default; Num.: SG/PL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tu (you.SG)</td>
<td>(SG)</td>
<td>(SG)</td>
<td>[aRive]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>il/elle (he/she)</td>
<td>(SG)</td>
<td>(SG)</td>
<td>[aRive]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ils/elles (they.MASC/they.FEM)</td>
<td>(PL)</td>
<td>(SG/PL)</td>
<td>[aRive]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nous (we)</td>
<td>(PL)</td>
<td>(PL)</td>
<td>[aRivjō]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vous (you.PL)</td>
<td>(PL)</td>
<td>(PL)</td>
<td>[aRivje]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

♦ 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 [aRivjō].
    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 φ-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-motion to end up in the main clause.

(23)  

\[ \text{a. *la fille que je l'ai vu qui embrassait} \quad \text{(Kayne 1975: 129)} \]

the girl who I him-have seen QUI was-kissing

‘the girl who I saw him kissing’

\[ \text{b. *Quelle sonate as-tu entendu Pierre qui jouait ?} \quad \text{(Ruwet 1982: 107)} \]

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.

References cited in this talk


