

## More on Relative Pronouns

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### 1. Relative clauses

In the spirit of Chomsky (1970) on ‘passive’, the notion ‘relative clause’ is unlikely to be a primitive. To an extent, this was already explicitly recognized in Chomsky (1977) and elsewhere, insofar as the *wh*-movement that plays a role in relative clauses also plays a role elsewhere (e.g in interrogatives).

Rizzi (1997) could be interpreted as backtracking from this position, insofar as the landing site for movement in relatives might be different (Spec,ForceP) from the landing site in interrogatives (Spec,FocP/IntP). On the other hand, this difference in landing site could be factored out from the common movement operation, and taken as a fact to be explained, in part, for example, by saying:

(1) *Wh*-movement in relatives cannot (normally) land below TopP because of locality considerations related to the subsequent extraction of the ‘head’ of the relative (from the perspective of the raising analysis of relatives).

Another aspect of relative clauses that is not specific to them is the presence of *wh*-words. A strong formulation would be (cf. Postma (1994)):

- (2) a. The *which* of (English) relatives is identical to the *which* of (English) interrogatives.
- b. The *where* of (English) relatives is identical to the *where* of (English) interrogatives, as well as to the *where* of *somewhere*, *nowhere*, *anywhere*, *everywhere*, *elsewhere*.
- c. and similarly for other *wh*-words in whatever language.

Of course, the surrounding syntactic environment must be at least partially different in relatives, interrogatives and indefinites.

(2) does not state that *wh*-words in relatives and interrogatives and indefinites have to match perfectly. In English *where* occurs in all three, but *who* occurs only in relatives and interrogatives. In Italian *quale* (‘which’) occurs in both relatives and interrogatives, but *cui* (‘who/what’), arguably an oblique form of *che* (i.e. *ch*-+*-ui*, lacking in Spanish, parallel to *lui*) occurs only in relatives and *chi* (‘who’) occurs only in interrogatives (and free relatives).

This point about *wh*-words not being specific to relatives carries over to relative pronouns related to demonstratives, such as German *d*-words and (if Kayne (2010) is correct) to English *that*, which occurs both as a relative pronoun and as an ordinary demonstrative.

The non-primitive status of ‘relative clause’ might also lead us to expect that the movement step in the derivation of relatives that splits NP/DP off from the determiner and moves it up to ‘head’ position is also not exactly specific to what we think of as relative clauses.

This is supported by the existence of sentences like the following, which, though somewhat marginal, are appreciably better (for me) than one might have imagined:

(3) ?That car over there belongs to my old friend John Smith, whose long-standing attachment to which is quite well-known.

That movement away from *which* is at issue in such sentences is indicated by the appearance of ECP-like effects:

(4) ??That car over there belongs to my old friend John Smith, whose long-standing desire for me to buy which is quite well-known.

Although a bit more marginal than the previous one, this example nonetheless contrasts sharply with:

(5) \*That car over there belongs to my old friend John Smith, whose long-standing desire for which to be bought by me/sold quickly is quite well-known.

The question whether to call the *which* of (3) a relative pronoun or not is, from the present perspective, of minor interest. The *which* of (3) has in common with the *which* of:

(6) the book which I was reading  
that both are stranded determiners, as relative pronouns are in general. (At the same time, the landing site is different in the two cases.)

## 2. Complex relative pronouns.

Leu (2008) has suggested that all determiners other than the articles are phrasal (which is fully compatible with what was said above). For Leu, *which* itself is phrasal (cf. also Vangsnes (2008)). A clear, well-known case of a phrasal relative pronoun is found in French and Italian, with the *wh*-word corresponding to *which* preceded by the definite article:

(7) la fille avec laquelle tu parlais ('the girl with the which you spoke')

(8) la ragazza con la quale tu parlavi

(I take the one-word spelling of *laquelle* ('the which') in French to be in this respect misleading. See Arregi (2000) for a proposal as to why the definite article is present in (such) relatives.)

Not previously recognized as a possible complex relative pronoun, on the other hand, is the French *ce que* found in sentences like:

(9) Ce qu'on craignait est arrivé. ('that what one feared is arrived' = 'what one feared has happened')  
One might readily think that *ce* here is the head of the relative in a way parallel to:

(10) Les choses qu'on craignait sont arrivées. ('the things what...')

Cet événement qu'on craignait est arrivé. ('that event what...')

in which *choses* and *événement* are the relative heads.

Yet (10) allows 'extraposition' of the relative fairly well:

(11) (?)Les choses sont arrivées qu'on craignait.

(?)Cet événement est arrivé qu'on craignait.

in a way that (9) does not:

(12) \*C'est arrivé qu'on craignait.

This would follow directly if *ce que* in (9) is a complex relative pronoun (and similarly for *ce qui*), with the relative clause in (9) consequently having no pronounced head.

Hans Bennis (p.c.) tells me that the restriction seen in (12) has a counterpart in Dutch with *dat, wat...*, which does not allow splitting via 'extraposition', despite Dutch having robust relative clause extraposition otherwise. He also notes that extraposition of *dat, wat...* as a whole is not possible, either

(and that seems to hold for French *ce que*..., too); why remains an open question, from the perspective of this section.

This complex relative pronoun *ce que* cannot occur as direct object in a visibly headed relative:

(13l) Quelque chose (\**ce*) qu'on craignait est arrivé. ('something...')

This restriction is in all likelihood at least partially related to the well-known restriction that prohibits the *laquelle* of (7) from corresponding to a direct object:

(14) \**la fille laquelle tu as mentionnée* ('the girl the which you have mentioned')

(although here dropping *la* leads to no improvement); and/or (13) is akin to:

(15) What we feared has happened.

vs.

(16) \*Something what we feared has happened.

In standard French *ce que* cannot be the object of a preposition:

(17) (\*)Ça, c'est quelque chose à ce que je pense jamais. ('that, that/it is something to that what I think never' = 'that's something I never think about')

but Jean-Yves Pollock tells me that (17) is found in some non-standard French, which would support the claim that *ce que* can be in at least some French a complex relative pronoun (i.e. a complex stranded determiner). (North Italian dialect examples comparable to (17) are given by Munaro (2000, 96, 103).)

The standard counterpart of (17) is:

(18) Ça, c'est quelque chose à quoi je ne pense jamais.

containing *quoi*, which is a non-clitic form of *que* (cf. Poletto and Pollock (2004a,b)), with both *quoi* and *que* arguably corresponding closely to English *what*. In (18) *quoi* is a relative pronoun (not accompanied by *ce* or by *le*).

If we alter (9) by using a verb that takes a prepositional complement rather than a direct object, we get:

(19) Ce à quoi il n'a pas pensé est arrivé. ('that to what he neg has not thought is arrived' = 'what he didn't think of happened')

which, like (9), does not allow 'extraposition' (which is to be distinguished in all of this from right-dislocation):

(20) \*C'est arrivé à quoi il n'a pas pensé.

suggesting that in (19) *ce à quoi* is a complex wh-phrase involving pied-piping of the preposition *à*, much as in (18) or (17) or (7).

Notable is the fact that in (19) *ce* and *quoi* must be separated by the preposition:

(21) \*A ce quoi il n'a pas pensé est arrivé.

Although this behavior distinguishes *ce* and *quoi* from the definite article of (7), which cannot be separated from *quelle* by the preposition:

(22) \**la fille la avec quelle tu parlais*

and also from (17), in which the preposition could not separate *ce* and *que*:

(23) \*Ça, c'est quelque chose ce à que je pense jamais.

(perhaps related to the fact that *que* cannot be the object of a preposition under any circumstances), there would seem to be some degree of parallelism between (19) vs. (21), on the one hand, and the contrast in Russian between the following two sentences:

(24) Ona ni s kem ne govorila. ('she neg+even with whom neg spoke' = 'she spoke with noone')

\*Ona s nikem ne govorila.

as well as the contrast in (my) English:

- (25) Not even to John would you have told the truth.  
 \*To not even John would you have told the truth.

An initial proposal, then, would be that in (19) *ce à quoi* is a wh-phrase in which *ce* occupies Spec,à, starting from a structure in which *ce quoi* is a constituent (whose internal constituent structure remains to be determined, and which probably contains an additional silent noun like THING). (Why the vowel of *ce* must be pronounced in *ce à quoi*, as opposed to in *C'est Jean* is not clear.)

Taking *ce* in *ce que* and in *ce à quoi* to be a determiner paired with *que/quoi* (plus a silent N), and not taking *ce* to be the head of the relative, provides an account of:

- (26) \*Ça qu'on craignait est arrivé.  
 (27) \*Cela qu'on craignait est arrivé.  
 (28) \*Ça à quoi il n'a pas pensé est arrivé.  
 (29) \*Cela à quoi il n'a pas pensé est arrivé.

in which neither *ça* nor *cela* can replace *ce*, in terms of the impossibility of *ça* and *cela* as determiners in:

- (30) *ce* livre  
 (31) \**ça* livre  
 (32) \**cela* livre

in which there is other overt material within the DP (a noun in (31)/(32) and *que/quoi* in (26)-(29)). If *ce* in (9) and (19) were a relative 'head', the impossibility of (26)-(29) would be harder to understand.

The complex wh-phrases *ce que* and *ce à quoi* also appear in embedded interrogatives in French (elevated French in the case of *ce à quoi*):

- (33) Je ne sais pas *ce* qu'il fait. ('I neg know not that what he does')  
 (34) Je ne sais pas *ce à quoi* il pense. ('I neg know not that to what he thinks')

The existence of these would be quite hard to understand if *ce* were taken to be a relative 'head'.

Striking, too, is the difference in status between:

- (35) ?Je ne suis pas certain/sûr qui on devrait inviter. ('I neg am not certain/sure who one should invite')

and:

- (36) ???Je ne suis pas certain/sûr *ce* qu'on devrait faire. ('I neg am not certain/sure that what on should do')

For some reason, (35) is less good for some speakers than its English counterpart. What is notable is that (36), though more marginal, is not completely out. If *ce* were the head of a relative, then (36) would be expected to have the fully deviant status of:

- (37) \*Je ne suis pas certain/sûr l'heure. ('I neg am not certain/sure the time')

in which *l'heure* cannot properly get Case, just as in English:

- (38) I'm not sure \*(of) the time.

as opposed to:

- (39) I'm not sure what we should do.

which (36) is now seen to be close to, with *ce que* corresponding to *what*.

### 3. The status of *ce* as a neutral demonstrative.

The *ce* that is part of *ce que* and *ce à quoi* is transparently related to the demonstrative *ce* of (30), yet does not participate in any *this/that*-type alternation of the sort seen in:

(40) *ce livre-ci*

(41) *ce livre-là*

in which *-ci* corresponds approximately to *here* and *-là* to *there*. Thus one could not add *-ci* or *-là* to any of the *ce que* or *ce à quoi* examples:

(42) \**Ce que ci/là on craignait est arrivé.* etc.

(In the case of *là* one has to set aside a potential reading in which *là* might be within the relative.)

Having a demonstrative that fails to participate in a *this/that*-type alternation is not something that is specific to *ce*. One finds the same in English in a range of cases:

(43) He's not all that/\*this smart.

(44) ?Only those/\*these people who have any money can see the film.

(45) those/\*these of us who are linguists

(46) the destruction of the bridge and that/\*this of the car

(47) the person that/\*this we were talking to

(48) We think that/\*this you should join us.

(49) them books (non-standard for *those books* but not for *these books*)

(50) Is there/\*here a book on that table?

Let me follow Kayne (2010) in saying that English *this* (but not *that*) is invariably accompanied by a (silent) person morpheme (and similarly for *here*) - v. also Jayaseelan & Hariprasad (2001). Then the contexts of (43)-(50) have the property that while allowing a demonstrative they do not allow the presence of an accompanying person morpheme.

From this perspective, it is clear that the *that* and *there* of (43)-(50) must not be accompanied by a person morpheme. In contexts in which *that* does contrast with *this*, as in:

(51) That book is more interesting than this book.

it might or might not be the case that *that* has an accompanying person morpheme (much as there might or might not be a singular morpheme in *a book*).

If we call the *that* and *there* of (43)-(50) neutral demonstratives, then we will do the same for all the instances of French *ce que* and *ce à quoi* under discussion, which are now seen to contain neutral demonstrative *ce*. (Languages with a three-way distinction in demonstratives, such as Spanish, need to be looked into, as does the *d-/jen-/dies-* distinction in German - cf. also Bluemel (2009) on *derjenig-*.)

#### 4. Romance vs. Germanic

It is not logically necessary that there be any parameter that neatly cuts between Romance and Germanic, in the sense of having one value in every Germanic language and the opposite value in every Romance language. On the other hand, we might well expect there to be some such cases if syntactic change is (sufficiently) conservative (cf. Crisma and Longobardi (2009)).

In the area of relative pronouns at issue in this talk, there does seem to be a difference between the two families (although not all the Germanic languages act the same), in the following sense. Various Germanic languages have demonstrative-related relative pronouns (with a neutral demonstrative). This is readily taken to be true of German and Dutch. Kayne (2010) argues that it is also true of English, whose relative *that* is a true relative pronoun, i.e. a stranded determiner (of the neutral demonstrative sort).

Put another way, English has relatives like:

(52) the book that I was reading

as do German and Dutch. Yet not a single Romance language (as far as I know) has relatives with a simple correspondent of *that*, e.g. in French:

(53) le livre que/\*ce/\*ça/\*cela je lisais ('the book what/that/that/that I read')

If the proposals above concerning *ce que* and *ce à quoi* are correct, though, the true generalization must be:

(54) Romance never allows a demonstrative as a 'stand-alone' relative pronoun even while sometimes allowing a demonstrative to be part of a larger relative pronoun as with *ce que* in French headless relatives as in (9) and (non-standard) headed relatives as in (17) (and similarly in some North(-West) Italian dialects studied by Munaro (2000)). The question now is why (54) should hold.

I note in passing that German *d*-words in relatives look like demonstratives, but also look like definite articles. I take them to be (neutral) demonstratives, and not to be pure definite articles, for the following reasons. First, Thomas Leu (p.c.) tells me that in Swiss German there is a distinction in dative masc. and neuter contexts between:

(55) uf em baerg ('on the mountain')

with definite article *em*, and:

(56) uf dem baerg ('on that mountain')

with demonstrative *dem*, and that in relatives one gets the demonstrative:

(57) dr ma bi dem wo du gschaffet hesch ('the man by *dem* where you worked have' = 'the man at whose place you worked')

Second, German preposition+article contraction, which does not carry over to preposition+demonstrative, does not carry over to preposition+relative-d-word, either.

Third, Günther Grewendorf (p.c.) tells me that definite article *das* in German can reduce to 's, but that that cannot happen with demonstrative *das*, nor with relative pronoun *das*.

Fourth, Wiltschko (1998) noted the absence of relative *the* in English:

(58) the book that/\*the we were discussing

to which can be added the fact that Romance languages, while having relative *laquelle*, *la quale*, etc., never have a bare definite article as a relative pronoun:

(59) la fille à la\*(quelle) je parlais ('the girl to the (which) I spoke')

(Similarly, Spanish has relative *la que* but not relative *la*.) A generalization of Wiltschko's point would be:

(60) A 'bare' definite article is never a possible relative pronoun.

(This would require that the definite articles of the Hebrew participial relatives discussed by Siloni (1995) not be relative pronouns.)

Wiltschko suggests that *the* is impossible in (58) for the same reason as in:

(61) We were discussing that/\*the.

This may well be on the right track (though Romance object clitics raise questions).

Let us now return to (54), i.e. to the question why Romance does not allow stand-alone relative pronouns of the demonstrative sort. Using English and French as initial exemplars of Germanic and Romance, we have the contrast:

(62) the book that you like

(63) \*le livre ce vous aimez

In the spirit of Wiltschko's proposal for (58)/(61), it is plausible to think that (62) vs. (63) is related to the contrast:

(64) You like that.

(65) \*Vous aimez ce.

where we see that French *ce*, even though demonstrative, cannot (with one major, principled exception) occur alone in argument position. (For details, see Kayne and Pollock (2010).)

French has a second demonstrative (seen in the earlier discussion of (26)-(32)) that contrasts in this respect with *ce*:

(66) Vous aimez ça.

Yet *ça* cannot be a relative pronoun, either:

(67) \*le livre ça vous aimez

The difference between (62) and (67) may well be related to:

(68) You like that book.

(69) \*Vous aimez ça livre.

with *ça* unable to be followed by an overt noun, much as with a third French demonstrative, *cela*, also translatable as *that*:

(70) Vous aimez cela.

(71) \*Vous aimez cela livre.

which is likewise impossible as a relative pronoun:

(72) \*le livre cela vous aimez

Since *cela* is almost certainly to be analyzed as *ce+là*, where the second element is that seen in:

(73) ce livre-là ('that book there')

(I take the absence of accent in *cela* to be of orthographic interest only) the impossibility of (71) is almost certainly that of:

(74) \*ce là livre

which Bernstein (1997) took to reflect obligatory movement of *livre* past *là* (which produces (73)).

We can now plausibly reduce (72) to (71). Let us assume in particular that the obligatory noun/NP-raising past *là* seen in (73) vs. (74) is incompatible (for reasons to be elucidated, perhaps of the 'improper movement' sort, or of the 'freezing' sort) with subsequent NP-raising of the sort that creates the 'head' of a relative.

If *ça* is almost identical to *cela*, i.e. if  $\text{ça} = \text{ce} + \text{à}$ , where *à* is the vowel of *là* (whose *l-* is a separate morpheme), then (69) arguably reduces to (71), as long as we can find an account of:

(75) \*ce livre-à

but if we can, then (67) will fully reduce to (72). *Ça* is not a possible relative pronoun because its *-à* induces NP-movement past it, and that NP-movement is incompatible, as in (72), with subsequent raising of the NP to 'head'-position.

The next question is whether the preceding discussion of French will extend to other Romance languages. It will if in other Romance languages neutral demonstratives corresponding to French *ce/ça/cela* obligatorily cooccur with a (sometimes silent) counterpart of the French reinforcer *-là* that obligatorily induces NP-movement of the sort that is incompatible with further movement of the 'relative 'head'-raising sort.

It might also be the case that the interfering NP-movement in Romance is reflected, too, in the fact that all of Romance has at least some adjectives that are necessarily postnominal.

A link to adjective position would not, however, be sufficient to account for the fact that (as far as I know) Slavic languages are like Romance languages with respect to (54), i.e. Slavic languages also lack relative pronouns of the bare demonstrative type. Yet Slavic languages seem to have prenominal

adjectives in a way that (at first glance, at least) is quite different from Romance. If it is true that no Slavic language has an exact counterpart of English relative *that* (or of German or Dutch relative *d*-pronouns), then either Slavic has obligatory NP-movement in the presence of demonstrative reinforcers (that are obligatorily present when a neutral demonstrative is) in a way that is unlinked to adjective positioning; or else Slavic demonstratives themselves must be blocking the ‘head’-raising type of movement, for reasons to be determined (but also see the Appendix).

(54) has a parallel in both Romance and Slavic (as far as I know) when it comes to what we call sentential complementizers of the sort found in English and French in:

(76) We think that you’re intelligent.

(77) Nous pensons que/\*ce/\*ça/\*cela vous êtes intelligent. (cf. (53))

English *that* is demonstrative-related, while French *que* is akin to English *what*, i.e. *que* is a wh-word. The generalization parallel to (54) is:

(78) Romance never allows a demonstrative as a sentential complementizer (and similarly for Slavic). Just as in the case of relative pronouns, Dutch and German pattern with English in having *dat* and *dass* as demonstrative-related sentential complementizers.

The fact that (78) holds parallel to (54) and distinguishes Romance (and Slavic) from (part of) Germanic supports the proposal in Kayne (2008b; 2010) that sentential complements are a subtype of relative clause, and that sentential complementizers of the *that* and *que* sort are relative pronouns. (This is related to, but quite different from, the proposal that goes back to Rosenbaum (1967), to the effect that sentential complements are DPs not involving wh-movement.)

## Appendix.

I suggested earlier that French *ce que* is a complex relative pronoun. The *que* part is necessary:

(79) Ce \*(que) tu as dit est très sensible. (‘that what you have said is very sensible’)

By the reasoning of the previous section, it must be the case, if *ce que* is a complex relative pronoun, that the presence of *que* somehow makes unnecessary the NP-movement that interferes with relative ‘head’-raising (though in (79) there is no head visible, if *ce que* is a relative pronoun).

Scandinavian languages are clearly distinct from English/Dutch/German when it comes to relative pronouns. Norwegian locative *der*, as mentioned by Taraldsen (1978, %), would seem to be an example of a demonstrative-related relative pronoun. But non-locative relative *d*-pronouns seem not to be found in Scandinavian. If so, the question is why. In the spirit of the earlier discussion of the relevance of reinforcer *-là* in Romance, a possibility that comes to mind is that this difference between Scandinavian and West Germanic should be attributed to the presence in Scandinavian, but not in West Germanic, of postnominal definite articles.

Assume that in the presence of a demonstrative a postnominal definite article is obligatory in Scandinavian, even if sometimes silent. Then it might be that the postnominal definite article associated with the demonstrative that is trying to be a relative pronoun obligatorily induces NP-movement, again of the sort that interferes with relative ‘head’-raising.

A separate higher demonstrative might of course have its own associated definite article in cases corresponding to English:

(80) That book that you were reading looked really interesting.



But it is only the lower *that* is relevant to this discussion.

As in the discussion of (78), it is notable that Scandinavian also lacks sentential complementizers of the *d*-pronoun sort found in English, Dutch and German. Scandinavian *at/att/adh* may be related to demonstratives, but even if they are they lack the initial *d*- (in a way that perhaps has no counterpart in Slavic). Thus it might be that the obligatoriness of the post-N definite article, which is the source of the absence of *d*-type relative pronouns, would no longer hold for *d*-less demonstratives, in which case such *d*-less demonstratives would be allowed to appear as complementizers (= relative pronouns) with sentential complements, as well as in some relative clauses.

The usual Scandinavian relative clause ‘introducer’ is *som/sem*, which recalls English dialectal relative *as*. In the spirit of my (to appear) attempt to link Romance *que/che* to the Germanic *was...für* type of DP, it might be that *som/sem/as* correspond to pieces of a larger DP (of the *such as* type) much of which is unpronounced.

The relevance of postnominal definite articles might extend to Slavic, thinking of Bulgarian and North Russian, and of Pesetsky’s (2007) recent proposal that Russian nominative morphemes are really Ds, though questions arise concerning the (non-)cooccurrence of postnominal definite articles with wh-words, somewhat as for (79).

The impossibility of ‘extraposition’ with *ce que* illustrated in (12) has a counterpart in French with:

(81) *Ceux que tu as commandés sont arrivés.* (‘those what you have ordered are arrived’)

(82) \**Ceux sont arrivés que tu as commandés.*

Extending our earlier reasoning to this case would lead to the proposal that *ceux que* can be a complex wh-phrase. (Cf. Munaro’s (2000, 96) dialect examples.) (This *ceux que* contains a pronoun *eux* in addition to demonstrative *ce* and wh-word *que*.)

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