Relative pronouns as sluiced remnants

1. The issue: the syntactic licensing of sluicing   Sluicing is an instance of clausal ellipsis that leaves a single *wh*-remnant and deletes a TP. It is known since Lobeck (1995:54-62) and Merchant (2001:54-61) that sluicing is restricted to constituent *wh*-questions, and is not allowed in other contexts, such as relatives:

(1) a.   Someone read that book, but I don't know who.
    b. * Someone read that book, but I didn't know {the person who / whoever}.

Merchant (2001:55-61) implements this restriction by means of the syntactic feature [E] on the C°-head of constituent questions whose complement is to be elided. [E] hosts all the syntactic, semantic and phonological properties which distinguish elliptical constructions from non-elliptical ones, and is itself endowed with strong and uninterpretable [+wh,+Q]-features ― features that require overt checking on C° in constituent questions and cannot be checked in any other context:

(2)   syntax of [E] in English sluicing: $E_{[u\text{wh}*, uQ*]}$

2. The novel data   While (1) and (2) appear to characterize sluicing in English and many other languages, the examples in (3) provide evidence that sluicing is in fact not confined to constituent questions but can apply in relative clauses as well, stranding the relative pronoun.

(3) a. Ezért   tartunk   ott, ahol   [e]
        this.for   be.PRES.3PL   there REL.where
        'That's why we are where(ever) we are.'
     b. Mindenki AZZAL   foglalkozott, amivel   [e]
        everyone   that.WITH   occupied.3sg   REL.what.WITH
        'Everyone was occupied with what(ever) he was occupied.'

That these pronominal–relative pronoun combinations are not idiomatic expressions is supported among other things by the following properties:
(i) the relative pronoun and its pronominal head may be discontinuous, cf. (3b)
(ii) for some speakers, the relative head can contain lexical nouns as well, cf. (4)

(4)$^{\%}$ Mindenki AZZAL   a dologgal   foglalkozott, amivel   [e]
        everyone   that.WITH the thing   occupied.3SG   REL.what.WITH

(**iii**) the relative clause shows tense matching with its antecedent, which follows if it contains a TP projection that is elided under semantic identity:

(5) a. Pénzügyi válság nélkül   nem tartanánk   ott, ahol   [TP tartunk]
        financial   crisis   without not be.**PRES**.COND.3PL there REL.where   be.**PRES**.3PL
        'Without the financial crisis we would not be where(ever) we are.'
     b. Pénzügyi válság nélkül   nem tartottunk volna ott, ahol   [TP tartottunk]
        financial   crisis   without not be.**PAST**.3PL COND   there REL.where   be.**PAST**.3PL
        'Without the financial crisis we would not have been where(ever) we were.'

3. The analysis: the licensing of sluicing relativized   To understand the difference between Hungarian and English in the availability of relative sluicing, the first step is to recognize that the syntactic content of [E] must be relativized in languages. Following earlier work, we argue that there is a correlation between the type of *wh*-movement a language exhibits and the syntax of [E]. In languages in which *wh*-phrases undergo focus movement to check an *operator* feature, sluicing occurs in any context where the remnant checks such a operator feature. In other words, sluicing is not restricted to interrogative environments.

(6)   syntax of [E] in languages with *wh*-movement to specFocP: $E_{[uOp*]}$
Due to (6), a focus or a universal quantifier (cf. 7) is a suitable remnant in sluicing, too:

(7) Tudtam, hogy János sok lányt meghívott, de nem tudtam, hogy mindet [e].
knew.1SG that J. many girl.ACC PV.invited but not knew.1SG that all.ACC

As for relative sluicing (ex. 3-5), we argue that the TP in the relative clause can undergo ellipsis as the relative pronoun in these constructions has a free choice interpretation and as such it checks an operator feature. Similarly to some uses of *-ever* relatives in English (cf. Jacobson 1995, von Fintel 2000), sluiced relatives in Hungarian can be used to indicate that the identity of the reference of the relative is irrelevant to the current conversational purposes or that the speaker is not willing to reveal it.

Importantly, the relative pronouns in relative sluicing can bear the single accent of the relative clause, a prosodic requirement for successful ellipsis of the rest of the relative clause (cf. 3'). Note that *csak*-affixed free choice pronouns are also capable of carrying accent (cf. 8) (unlike ordinary, non-free choice relative pronouns):

(3') a. Ezért tartunk ott, 'ahol.
b. Mindenki AZZAL foglalkozott, 'amivel.
(8) Meghívhatsz, 'akit csak akarsz.
invite.pot.2sg who.acc want.2sg

4. A curious prosodic restriction In addition to the obligatory accent on the relative pronoun, sluiced relatives must also observe a less straightforward condition: the accent on the relative pronoun must be final in its phonological phrase. This rules out cases in which the relative pronoun is followed by other material, such as a dressed postposition, regardless of the distribution of the accent (9b,c,d):

(9) a. Mindenki jól érezte magát azzal, 'akivel.
everyone well felt himself that.with REL.who.with
b. * Mindenki jól érezte magát a nélkül, 'aki 'nélkül.
c. * Mindenki jól érezte magát a nélkül, 'aki ^{0}nélkül
d. * Mindenki jól érezte magát a nélkül, ^{0}aki 'nélkül.
everyone well felt himself that without REL.who without

This behaviour is reminiscent of a similar prosodic constraint on swiping, a type of sluicing in which the complement of a preposition appears before the preposition. In swiping, the accent must fall on the phrase-final preposition:

(10) She fixed it, but God only knows { ^{0}what 'with / * 'what ^{0}with / * 'what 'with}.

Following the account of swiping in Merchant (2002), we will argue that relative sluicing is subject to a constraint that requires the phrase-final accent to be the head of the phonological phrase. Such a constraint rules out (9b, 9c) as instances where the heaviest accent is not final, and (9d) is ruled out because it wrongly predicts contrastive focus on the postposition.

5. Back to English Hungarian relative sluicing demonstrates that sluicing has a wider distribution than hitherto assumed. In fact this kind of sluicing might underlie the English (11), and be the historic source of sentence-final *-ever* pronouns (cf. 12) as well.

(11) John left, but I can't remember the reason why (~~he left~~).
(12) Bring me something, a beer, a juice, whatever (~~you bring me~~).

References von Fintel 2000 Whatever. *SALT* 10. * Jacobson 1995 On the quantificational force of free relatives. In Bach et al *Quantification in natural languages.* Kluwer. * Lobeck 1995 *Ellipsis: functional heads, licensing and identification*. OUP. * Merchant 2001. *The syntax of silence*. OUP. * Merchant 2002 Swiping in Germanic. In Zwart & Abraham *Comparative Germanic Syntax*. Benjamins.