Considerations on restrictive relative clauses and adjunction in Modern Italian and Portuguese and Standard German

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Abstract

The following paper returns to the question of whether restrictive relative clauses are instances of wh-movement in the sense of Chomsky 1964 and subsequent transformational publications such as Vergnaud 1974 and many others. We tackle the hypothesis of Carlson 1977 who proposes that there is a subset of restrictive relative clauses he dubs amount relatives. While in English and Italian, there are grammatical evidences for this sub class of relative clauses, other languages such as Portuguese and German lack these evidences or any others. In addition, we point at the two-splitted way that linguists look at restrictive relative clauses. While there is a syntactic tradition around Carlson's work, semantic work around Partee exists as well. The persistent problem in modern linguistics: Both traditions do not relate to each other.

Keywords: Semantic and syntax of quantifiers, strong cross over, weak cross over, *ne*-cliticization, imbedded questions.

1. Introduction

In this paper we will unveil some research desiderata which – to our knowledge – are untreated in current linguistic literature. Pollock 2021 (online since December 2020) analyses *qu'est-ce que*-constructions in modern European French but the question we treat in our article is not concerned by him. The exhaustive study by Schafroth 1993 on relative pronouns has a completely different perspective than our article and we do not consider his broad scale model in our small field of rather theoretical considerations. The emphasis of Schafroth is rather lexical while our focus is on the syntax-semantic-interface.

Traditionally descriptive grammars distinguish between three types of relative clauses (furthermore RC), these are restrictive RC (1a), appositive RC (1b) and free RC (1c), cf. Cinque 1988:457-517, Veloso 2013:2061-2134:¹

- (1) a. Ho rivisto la ragazza che era con te ieri. Ital.
 - '[I] have seen again the girl who was with you yesterday'
 - a'. O gato que eu vi na varanda é tigrado. Eur. Port.
 - 'The cat which I saw in the terrace is striped'

¹ This classification is not uniform, the first two types are semantically defined and the third is syntactically determined. We are grateful for discussions with Gisella Ferraresi, Wolfgang Heydrich, Hans Lohrengel, and Jacopo Torregrossa. Remaining flaws are to our responsibility, M.G. & M.G. Many thanks to Blanca and Markus Schäffauer. A prevision of this article has been prepared with Gisella Ferraresi.

b. La sua proposta, *che è senza dubbio frutto di compromesso*, otterrà i voti sufficienti per passare.

'His / her proposal, that is without doubt the product of a compromise, will obtain the necessary votes to pass'

- b'. Lisboa, que é a capital de Portugal, é uma cidade com uma luz especial.
- 'Lisbon, which is the capital of Portugal, is a city with a special light'
- c. Qui non mangia non ingrassa.
- 'Who does not eat does not get fat'
- c'. Quem vai ao mar perde o lugar. (cf. Mateus et al. 2003:675-685)
- 'Who goes to the sea loses the place'

Most of the modern linguistic works on relative clauses focuses on restrictive relative clauses, see Carlson 1977, Chomsky 1975, Heim & Kratzer 1998: chap. 5, Hulsey & Sauerland 2006, Partee 1976. More recently, free RCes have gained some greater attention, see Fuß & Grevendorf 2014. But appositive RCes are not over investigated, see e.g. Lasnik & Stowell 1991. Since the seventies of the last century there are mainly two traditions, one is nearly exclusively syntactic and the other one is strongly semantically driven.

To the first one, see Chomsky 1975, Chomsky 1982, Lasnik & Stowell 1991, Safir 1986, etc. Literature clearly semantically inclined is Carlson 1977, Heim & Kratzer 1998, Hulsey & Sauerland 2006, Partee 1976, Partee 2005. These two traditions barely take notice of each other and if at all by rejecting the other part, see Safir 1986: FN2. We think that it is a research void to bring together these two traditions. Even Cinque 2020, in assuming a double headed structure of all relative clauses, does not point to this split perspective on restrictive relative clauses. In this paper we will try to set out some open questions for further research in this respect. We

Among restrictive RC, Carlson distinguishes a subclass that he calls amount relatives (2b).

start with Carlson 1977 and after that we will discuss the other mentioned literature.

(2)

- a. * Some man [there was ____ on the life-raft] died (restrictive RC)
- b. Every man [there was on the life-raft] died (amount RC)

If we compare Modern Italian with European Portuguese in (3), we discover that Italian behaves like English while Portuguese does not. In Portuguese, both sentences are grammatical.

- (3) Modern Italian and Modern Portuguese
- a. * Qualche uomo che c'era nella barca è morto
- 'Some man there was on the boat died'
- a.' Algum homem que estava no barco morreu
- b. Ogni uomo che c'era nella barca è morto
- 'Every man there was on the boat died'
- b.' Cada homem que estava no barco morreu.

Native speakers of Portuguese, European as well as Brazilian, dislike the usage of *cada* and prefer *todos*. But it is not ungrammatical to use *cada*.

Now, what Carlson does with these relative clauses is to distinguish between different types of quantifiers and in doing this he goes back to Milsark 1974, 1977. In order to expose the history of the debate properly, we make an excursus on the classification of quantifiers.

2. Semantic and syntactic features of quantifiers

Milsark uses existential (thetic) sentences to classify several types of quantifiers that he arranges on a scale from weak to strong, only the weak ones being allowed in those constructions:

(4)

- a. There are unicorns in every wood. (indef. zero article in plural)
- b. * There were all viewpoints considered (all-quantifier)

Milsark's work became very influential. His work is in principle a syntactic consideration. Another work on quantification in English, semantically driven, appeared in the early seventies, this was Montague's 1972 'The proper treatment of quantification in ordinary English', also dubbed PTQ. This was reconciled with transformational grammar in Partee 1973, 1976. Montague introduces the types for parts of the speech, e for 'entity' and t for 'truth', more complex types being composed of these in a proper way. This is taken up by Heim & Kratzer 1998 and they compose their types in a strict binary fashion (in respect to Kayne 1984). 1981 the mathematician Barwise and the computer linguist Cooper wrote their seminal paper on 'Generalized quantifiers and natural language' (this is very much in the spirit of Russel 1905, and mirrors Longobardi 1994). They point out that since the mid-fifties of the last century in the field of mathematics there is a vivid debate on not first order quantifiers (such as 'infinite many') that cannot be defined in terms out of the first-order \exists , \forall quantifiers. Their paper aim to bring together the consideration of mathematics with investigations on natural language quantifiers and they refer to Milsark 1977 and to Montague 1974 (this is a version of Montague 1972). They try to make a classification of quantifiers in the vain of Milsark – but they amplify the classification criteria, using e.g. a 'lives on'-property, monotonicity property, persistency property and so on. We will come back to this later. An independent but slightly later proposal to classify English quantifiers is of Keenan and Stavi 1986. This is semantically driven but they use other rather semantic tests to classify these items. For example, the 'lives on'-property of Barwise and Cooper 1981 is their conservativity function, but in the rest they have other considerations.

Thus, since Russel 1905 mainly semanticists and logicians investigate the nature of noun phrases and quantification but they do not care so much for their syntactic behaviour, rather for their set theoretic qualities and for their logical type (compare Heim & Kratzer 1998). In syntax, to our knowledge, Milsark is the first to analyse different types of quantifiers and thetic existential sentences are his tool of investigation. The next one is May 1977, 1985. He is concerned with scope mismatches of two quantifiers in one and the same sentence. He invents quantifier raising to explain those scope mismatches and adjoins quantifier phrases at S at LF. He calls this Chomsky-adjunction. S is transformed to the Inflection phrase in Chomsky 1981, and since this time quantifier raising targets IP. In those days, quantifier raising leaves a

variable, this implies it is A'-movement being equalized with wh-movement. What is unfortunate is the fact that no one cares for negation and equally no one considers Rizzi 1982 Chap. IV on the equivalence of Wh- and Neg-Movement.

Zamparelli 2000 tries to reconcile these syntactic proposals with the semantic hypotheses on strong versus weak quantifiers and he goes back to Barwise and Cooper 1981 but not to Keenan and Stavi 1986. Zamparelli proposes to move strong quantifiers and not the weak ones. More recently, Ahn & Sauerland 2015 investigate proportional quantifiers such as '66 per cent of all employees of Microsoft are women'. They analyse them as weak ones in the sense of Keenan and Stavi 1986. In contrast to Zamparelli – and without taking notice of his work – they just want to move the weak ones and leave the strong ones in situ. We conclude it is not only in the field of relative clauses where semanticists and syntacticians do not come together at all. The same holds for the matter of quantifiers. Moreover, among semanticists there seems to be no cross scientific agreement.

A next problem in the field of quantifiers is constituent negation. Milsark and Carlson leave them out and do not mention them at all. Barwise and Cooper as well as Keenan and Stavi consider 'no' as weak while 'neither' is classified as strong. Furthermore, Barwise and Cooper show that they are left monotone falling:

- (5)
- a. All man run → All English man run
- b. No man run → No English man run

They say that coordination can collect only quantifiers of the same monotonicity quality, in this respect, coordination of 'all' and 'no one' is feasible.

(6) Così parlò Zarathustra. Un libro per tutti e per nessuno.

The same holds for English and German. There are more things to say about the coordination 'e', because the structure does not become worse by substitution of 'e' by 'o'. So where is the compositionality? The syntactic categorical status of coordination over all is quite unclear. Moreover, one cannot substitute 'tutti' by 'ognuno' with either coordinator, this is the same for the German counterparts. Thus, this type of adjunction is not fully understood. But now, let's have a look at the following.

- (7) Modern Italian
- a. * Ci sono tutti gli uomini nel giardino
- 'There are all men in the garden'
- b. Non c'è nessun uomo nel giardino.
- 'There isn't anyone in the garden'

Thus, according to thetic exitentials, in Italian 'all' is strong – but 'no one' is weak. And what about our relative clauses? In the next chapter we come back to the question how quantifiers and relative clauses interact.

3. Interrelation of relative clauses and quantifiers

We share Carlson's intuition that relative clauses modifying a quantified phrase are not true restrictive relative clauses. If we say 'we know the syntacticians who work on Italian focus structure', we restrict the set of syntacticians to who we refer. If we say 'we know all syntacticians who work on Italian relative clauses', we do not restrict the set of syntacticians, rather we say that the set is exhausted. Let us see what occurs with the constituent negation in Italian.

(8) Modern Italian

Nessun uomo che c'era nella barca è morto (anzi non c'era nessun uomo nella barca)

'No man that there was on the boat died (rather there was no man on the boat)'

In contrast to 'ogni' which presupposes the existence of the entity quantified over, 'nessuno' does not so since one can utter the bracket sentence. In this respect, 'nessuno' patterns with 'qualcuno' which does not presuppose the existence of the entity quantified over either. For Modern Italian, let us have the *ne*-cliticization test with those quantifiers as proposed by Cardinaletti & Giusti 1991:

(9) Modern Italian

- a. Anna conosce qualche racconto del nonno.
- 'Anna knows some stories of the grandpa'
- b. * Anna ne conosce qualche
- 'Anna knows some of them'
- c. Anna conosce ogni racconto del nonno.
- 'Anna knows every story of the grandpa'
- d. * Anna ne conosce ogni.
- 'Anna knows every of them'
- e. Anna non conosce nessun racconto del nonno.
- 'Anna does not know any story of the grandpa'
- f. Anna non *ne* conosce nessuno.
- 'Anna does not know any of them'

With respect to *ne*-cliticization, *nessuno* patterns with *qualche* but not with *ogni*. Concerning the amount relative test, *nessuno* patterns with *ogni/tutti*. This is not true as to existential sentences, consider (7b). So, future research has to look for which properties of quantifiers are universal and which are probably parametrized and how. Furthermore, the classifications and tests have to be related to each other and ordered.

Portuguese does not have any equivalent to the Italian *ne* and therefore we cannot make parallel tests as in Italian. With respect to any relative clause modifying the quantifier phrases as in (3) above, Portuguese does not show any differences concerning this structure, consider even (9'):

- (9') Nenhum livro que estava na estanteira queimou.
- 'No book that was on the shelf burnt'

Thus, in Portuguese there is no evidence that restrictive relative clauses behave different from amount relatives concerning different quantifier elements such as *qualquer*, *cada*, and *nenhum*. In the next chapter we follow the question whether relative sentences are indeed instances of wh-movement or rather constructions of their own right.

4. Relative sentences and wh-movement

Thus, the opening article for the semantic debate on relative clauses is – to be clear – more engaged in the analysis of quantifiers and less so of relative clauses (Carlson 1977). In the semantic driven research, this article has led to a distinction between the raising (movement) versus the matching hypothesis concerning restrictive relative clauses, see Sauerland 2000, Hulsey & Sauerland 2006. We will leave this out, in our paper, from exposition, because this will take us too much apart from our claim in the last part of this paper.

From the mid-seventies, there is a controversy between Partee 1973, reprinted in Partee 1976, and Chomsky 1975 concerning the structure of restrictive relative clauses. Partee proposes to adjoin a restrictive relative clause to the NP which is then combined with the determiner to yield a DP (in modern terms) while Chomsky prefers that in the first step the determiner combines with the noun and after that the relative clause is adjoined to the DP. In the semantic tradition Partee's proposal survived, see Heim & Kratzer 1998, Hulsey & Sauerland 2006 and this is due to lambda-abstraction. But what happened there after in syntax, let's have a look at this.

The first instance of the idea that relative clauses are cases of wh-movement we found in Chomsky (1964:37f.). In Chomsky (1982:38, 52) relative clauses are subsumed under wh-movement using the test of parasitic gaps:

(10)

- a. which articles did John file *t* without reading *e* (constituent question)
- b. these are the articles that Bill wrote t without [PRO correcting e] (restrictive RC)

Safir (1986:664) points out that NP-movement does not license parasitic gaps, look at (11):

(11)

- a. [Which report]_i did you file [e]_i without reading [e]_i (wh-movement)
- b.* [This book]_i appears [e]_i to be long without it seeming [e]_i to be interesting (NP-movement)

Safir's paper is in Chomsky's tradition with respect to adjunction of the restrictive relative to NP. He rejects Partee's argumentation, see Safir (1986:665 and FN 2). Safir adds to the tests weak crossover. He shows that non-restrictive relative clauses do not exhibit Weak Crossover Effects (WCO):

(12)

- a. LF * [[a man]_i [who_i [[his_i wife] loves [e]_i]]] (restrictive relative, WCO)
- b. LF [[John]_i [who_i [[his_i wife] loves [e]_i]]] (non-restrictive relative, no WCO)
- c. LF' [[John]_i [who_i [[his_i wife] loves [e]_i]]]

Safir (1986:669) assumes that at LF', a level derived from LF by the rule of Predication (the idea goes back to Chomsky 1982), the identification of the indexes i and j is done. Lasnik & Stowell (1991: §3.2) reject the idea of LF'. Instead they amplify the class of empty categories and propose that the parasitic gap is an empty epithet licensed by a null operator.

Unfortunately, the debate does not tell us whether the parasitic gap test is also a diagnostic for appositive relative sentences, so look at (13, 14):

- (13) Modern Italian (northern variant)
- a. ??? Giannii che suai moglie ama senza criticare ei
- b. Gianni_i che sua_i moglie ama senza criticar*lo*
- (14) Modern High German (northern variant)
- a. * Hans, den seine Frau liebt, ohne zu kritisieren
- b. Hans, den seine Frau liebt, ohne *ihn* zu kritisieren

What about English?

(15) John who his wife loves without criticizing is guilty of committing a crime

Thus, it might well be that the lack of Weak Crossover Effects in appositive relative clauses is universal, but the licensing of parasitic gaps is parameterized and possibly subject to syntactic change (c.f. Assmann 2013, we don't accept her acceptability judgements).

And again, let us test constituent negation in this respect.

(16)

- a. No one who his wife loves without criticizing will commit a crime (Modern English)
- b. *keiner, den seine Frau liebt ohne zu kritisieren, wird ein Verbrechen begehen (Modern High German)
- b'. keiner, den seine Frau liebt ohne *ihn* zu kritisieren / bezweifeln, wird ein Verbrechen begehen (Modern High German)
- c. ???? Nessuno_i che sua_i moglie ama senza criticare committerà un crimine (consider (7b) above) (Modern Standard Italian)
- c'. Nessuno $_i$ che sua $_i$ moglie ama senza criticar lo_i commiterà un crimine (Modern Standard Italian)

A third test concerning wh-structure is reconstruction at LF. The idea is attributed to Chomsky 1977 by May (1985:79) but in fact it is first in May 1985 where it is called like this. We illustrate this phenomenon on the basis of Haegeman (2012:10) because her exemplification makes the point clearer (at least to us) than May in the original text.

- (17) [Which picture of himself_i]_j will John_i sell t_j
- If (17) was the valid LF of the sentence, the anapher 'himself' would not be bound. Therefore, it has to be assumed that the wh-constituent is 'reconstructed' in its deep-structural position at

LF in order to fulfil principle A of the binding theory. We checked this in our reference languages:

(18)

- a. Welche Bilder von sich selbst will Peter verkaufen? (Mod. High German)
- b. Quali foto di se stesso vuole vendere Pietro? (Mod. Stand. Ital.)
- c. * Das sind die Bilder von sich selbst, die Peter verkaufen will (Mod. High German)
- d. * Queste sono le foto di se stesso che Pietro vuole vendere (Mod. Stand. Ital.)

We see, in constituent question structure (18a,b) the effect is alike to the English example in (17). But then we cannot use this test in relative clauses, see (18c, d). Schenner 2019 discusses reconstruction effects in Modern Standard German relative clauses. To us his examples seem highly marked if not ungrammatical. Also Salzmann's 2019 contribution to the debate about German relative clauses and reconstruction seems to us not to speak about an unmarked construction. We are unable to share his grammaticality judgements; therefore, we do not get into this discussion.²

Another piece of evidence concerning the difference between relative clauses and whstructures comes from Basque. In relative constructions, the relative clause must precede the
main clause (19) and behaves in this respect as all embedded clauses. In contrast, the
embedded question in (20) follows its matrix clause. Nevertheless they share the embedding
suffix $\{-n\}$ following the respective forms dizu-n and due-n of the auxiliary ukan – 'to have'
(examples from Pilar Larrañaga)³:

(19) Modern Basque

[zu-ri polts-a-Ø lapurtu d-i-zu-n Rel] gizon-a-Ø

you.2SG-DAT bag-ART-ABS steal.PTCP ABS.3SG-DAT-AUX-**REL** man-ART-ABS ezagu-tzen d-u-t (ni-k) (Basque)

know.PROG ABS.3SG-AUX-ERG.1Sg (I-ERG)

'(I) know the man who has stolen your bag' (\emptyset is an empty morpheme)

(20) Modern Basque

ba al d-aki-zu

particle: affirmative emphasis particle: sentence question ABS.3SG-know-ERG.2SG [nor-k zu-ri polts-a-Ø lapurtu d-u-e-**n** wh]?

who-ERG your-DAT bag-ART-ABS steal.PTCP ABS.3SG-AUX-binding vowel-**REL** 'do you know who has stolen your bag?'

² These authors are not the only ones to construct a theoretical claim about questionable data. Cinque 2008 gives the following example in Italian.

⁽i) L'unico che potrebbe è tuo padre, il quale potrà, credi, perdonarci per quello che abbiamo fatto? The only one who could is your father, by whom will we ever be forgiven, you think, for what we have done? The native speakers we ask do totally reject this sentence as ungrammatical.

³ The verb *ezagutu* in the matrix sentence in (19) is like German 'kennen'/ Italian 'conoscere', the verb in (20) *jakin* is 'wissen' / 'sapere', this difference cannot be translated into English.

The relative clause in (19) is an adjunct to *gizona* 'the man' while the embedded question in (20) is the complement of the matrix verb *dakizu* 'you know'.

At any event, the status of the reconstruction test has to be revised for further alleged structures of wh-movement. Again: we have to look for language universals and for the intricate interplay between different parameters concerning relative clauses.

The last test concerning wh-movement is with strong islands, see e.g. Szabolcsi & Lohndal (2017:5)

(21)
a. * About which topic did you leave [because Mary talked] (wh-movement from an adjunct
clause)
b. * Which kid must you call [the teacher who punished] (wh-movement from a rel clause)
This can be used to show that rel clauses are strong islands.
(22) Modern High German
a. * Was kennst du Konstantin, der auf dem Tisch vergessen hat? (non-restrictive RC)
'What do you know K. who has left on the table'
b. * Was wird krank, wer isst? (Free RC)
'What will be ill who eats'

What we see in (22) is that a constituent question is built in order to show that the RCes are islands. But what is not made by this method that a relative clause extracts from a strong island. That is the method of strong island is mainly dependent on wh-movement and cannot show that relative clauses are instances of wh-movement. But compare Sauerland (2000) and Hulsey & Sauerland 2006.

In the last decade, these debates do not play any role in linguistic research on relative clauses, see Poletto & Grewendorf 2015, Fuß & Grewendorf 2014. That the strong island test is not applied is understandable, since this does not give any evidence about the fact that RCes are instances of wh-movement. Weak Crossover might be subject to language variation and change – and should be investigated regarding parameter qualities. The same is true for parasitic gaps. Our plea is to look for universals and parameters in these structures and the interrelation of syntactic operations with semantic features, c.f. Longobardi 2003.

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