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Beiträge aus Forschung und Anwendung

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Informationen und Hinweise

On the strength of D^0: case resolution phenomena in free relative clauses

Emanuela Sanfelici

Abstract

This paper proposes a novel account of free relative clauses (RCs), which associates case resolution patterns to the typology of D^0 heads à la Longobardi (1994), Guardiano & Longobardi (2005). Although free RCs generally obey matching requirements, certain languages tolerate configurations where the case assigned by the matrix clause to the nominal phrase containing the free RC conflicts with that assigned within the RC. Languages vary as to whether they allow for case conflicting configurations and apply case resolution, and, if they do, as to whether the case conflict is resolved in compliance with that assigned from the matrix or the RC probe. By adopting a cartographic approach to free RCs, I account for the linguistic variation by means of two ingredients: (a) the property of the D^0 head in a given language, strong vs. weak D^0, and, in turn, of the feature-sharing mechanisms between D^0 and the lower heads; (b) the operation of chain reduction phrased in terms of a subset relation.

1 Introduction[1]

Free RCs are embedded clauses introduced by a wh-expression and lack the nominal lexical head that characterizes lexically-headed RCs. Despite being full clauses, free RCs function as nominal, prepositional, adjectival or adverbial phrases in their host clauses, exhibiting the same distribution and interpretation as DPs, PPs, AdjPs, or AdvPs (Chomsky 1973; Bresnan & Grimshaw 1978; Grosu 1994; Kayne 1994; Pittner 1995; Grosu & Landman 1998; Citko 2004; Donati 2006; Cinque 2008; Ott 2011, among many others). Whereas in lexically-headed RCs the lexical nominal expression usually fulfills the requirements of the matrix clause probe and the wh-pronoun satisfies those of the RC-internal probe, in free RCs the wh-pronoun seems to concomitantly satisfy both probes.

The dual role of the wh-pronoun in free RCs is reflected in a series of properties which have always posed a challenge for any syntactic theory of free RCs: (i) the obeyance of the matching requirement; (ii) reconstruction effects; (iii) ban on CP

[1] Abbreviations in examples follow Leipzig glossing conventions, with the following additions: A – set A (ergative, possessive); B – set B (absolutive); CL – clitic; CP – complementizer phrase; DP – determiner phrase; FR – free relative; OPT – optative mood; PRTC – particle; TV – transitive status suffix.

extraposition; (iv) agreement between the wh-pronoun and the external probe; (v) subextraction from the wh-phrase. I illustrate each property.

(i) Differently from lexically-headed RCs, free RCs obey the so-called matching requirements. In lexically-headed RCs the lexical nominal head is usually marked for the case assigned by the external probe and the pronoun introducing the RC is usually marked for the case assigned RC-internally. In free RCs, there is only one lexical element, i.e., the wh-pronoun. The case of the wh- phrase selected by the RC predicate must match the case (1) of the phrase embedding the free RC, which is selected by the matrix probe (Grimshaw 1977).

(1) Serbo-Croatian (Pancheva 2000: 4–5)

a. *Pomoći*$_{dat}$ *će* ***kome*** *god* *oni* *pomo-gnu*$_{dat}$
help will.3SG who.DAT ever they help-3PL

'He will help whoever they help.'

b. *Pomoći*$_{dat}$ *će* ****ko/*kome*** *god* *dodje*$_{nom}$
help will.3SG who.NOM/who.DAT ever come.3SG
Prva
first

'He will help whoever comes first.'

Some languages however tolerate, to different degrees, configurations in which the case assigned by the probe in the matrix clause to the nominal phrase containing the free RC (henceforth, external case) and that assigned by the probe within the RC (henceforth, internal case) do not match when the free RC occurs in argumental positions and case resolution applies (Hirschbühler 1976; Bresnan & Grimshaw 1978; Groos & van Riemsdijk 1981; Suñer 1983, 1984; Pittner 1991, 1995; Grosu 1994, 2003).[2] Hence, with respect to the matching requirement there are: (a) strict matching languages, like Serbo-Croatian (1), that do not allow for case resolution in case conflicting configurations (Borsley 1984; Citko 2001)[3] and

[2] Case resolution may apply in some languages when the free RC occupies non-argumental positions. There are (i) languages in which the external and internal cases must match (e.g., French, Harbert (1983)) and (ii) languages, in which case resolution applies only when free RCs are in non-argumental positions. Hirschbühler & Rivero (1981, 1983) first notice that languages, such as Spanish and Catalan, which *bona fide* are strict matching languages, tolerate non-matching configurations when the free RC occurs in non-argumental positions, e.g., in extraposed position. Notably, in those languages obligatory matching is required when the free RCs are in argumental position (see also Bianchi 1999; Cinque 2013, 2020a). In this paper I leave aside positionally-depending case resolutive languages. Hirschbühler & Rivero (1981), Suñer (1983) and Harbert (1983) propose that the relevant distinction between languages regarding (non-)matching in subject position is being pro-drop: the external case is assigned to *pro* in Spec,TP. The same observation holds for Slavic languages like Polish, Serbo-Croatian, Slovene (Borsley 1984; Izvorksi 1997; Pancheva 2000: 18–21), and Bulgarian (Rudin 1986: ch.6), Romenian (Grosu 1994: 37), Greek (Alexiadou & Varlokosta 2007), which are also pro-drop languages.

[3] Other languages behave like Serbo-Croatian: Polish (Pancheva 2000), Slovene (Izvorski 1997), and Russian (Milani 2015). English can be considered a strict matching language, following the

(b) languages that do tolerate the two cases to be distinct and display case resolution, like Modern Greek, German (Bresnan & Grimshaw 1978; Groos & van Riemsdijk 1981; Suñer 1983, 1984; Pittner 1991, 1995; Grosu 1994, 2003; van Riemsdijk 2000, 2006; Ott 2011; Fuß & Grewendorf, Groat 2012; Cinque 2020a,b; a.o.).

Those languages that apply case resolution differ in the direction the case conflict is resolved, i.e., either in compliance with the external (2a) or the internal (2b) case. Those languages that resolve case conflicts in favor of the external case are labeled external matching languages, while I label internal matching languages those that display case resolution in favor of the internal case.

(2) a. Standard Modern Greek (Daskalaki 2011: 140–141)
Éđosa$_{gen}$ *leftá* ***ópju/*ópjos*** *me*
give.pst.1sg money who.Gen/who.nom cl-1stSg.Acc
voíθise$_{nom}$
helped-3rdSg

'I gave money to those who helped me.'

b. Standard Modern German (Grewendorf & Groat 2013: 5; Vogel 2001: 344–345)
Ich *lade ein*$_{acc,}$ ****we-n/we-m*** *auch* *Maria*
I.NOM invite.1SG who-ACC /who-DAT also Maria
vertrau-t$_{dat}$
trust-3SG

'I invite whoever Maria also trusts.'

In addition, in external and internal matching languages case resolution is not always possible, rather it must obey a case hierarchy (Grosu 1994; Vogel 2001; Caha 2009; Assmann 2013, a.o.). When the case hierarchy is not met, languages behave differently (Section 3).

The dual role of the wh-pronoun is observed since only one case can be realized in free RCs (I come back to this in Section 3 and 5). Variation concerns whether the two cases must match or not. Languages display three points of variation:

literature (Grosu 1994, van Riemsdijk 2006). However, Radford (2016: 468) reports cases of resolution in English: (i) *Whomever you elect will serve a four-year term*. If this example enters the picture, English should be considered a language with case resolution in favour of the internal case. Notice that these cases should be treated differently from those quoted in fn.3, since English is not a subject pro-drop language. Further support of the claim that English tolerates some case mismatch configurations and resolves them in compliance with the RC-internal case comes from sentences like (i) *How sweet, whoever's boyfriend did this is a lucky girl* (Quizilla.com, 2–20–2007) investigated in Francis (2007), where the possessive wh-pronoun inside the free RC is the subject of the matrix clause. Since there seems to be a high degree of intraspeaker variation on the use of wh-forms as clarified in Radford, I do not comment English any further.

a. Languages differ as to whether case resolution applies or not: languages can therefore be either strictly matching or resolutive languages;
b. If they are resolutive languages, case resolution goes in compliance with either the internal or external case;
c. If they are resolutive languages, languages differ as to whether and how case resolution applies when the case hierarchy is not obeyed.

The dual role of the wh-pronoun in free RCs is further exhibited by (ii) reconstruction effects and (iii) the ban on CP extraposition. The locality phenomena suggest that the wh-pronoun is located inside the relative CP (3-4). I illustrate variable binding in (3) and the ban on extraposition in (4) with German, a language that generally allows CP extraposition.

(3) Die Student-en kauf-en, [FR welch-es seiner$_i$ Büch-er
the student-NOM.PL buy-3PL which-NOM/ACC his book-PL

jeder Professor$_i$ empfiehl-t]
every.NOM.SG professor recommend-3SG

'The students buy whichever of his books every professor recommends.' (Fuß, Grewendorf & Groat 2012, ex.15)

(4) a. Ich denk-e, dass ich [FR was ich
I.NOM think.1SG that I.NOM what.NOM/ACC I.NOM
mag] essen kann
like.1SG eat can.1SG

b. * *Ich denke, dass ich* [*was t*FR] *essen*
I.NOM think.1SG that I.NOM what.NOM/ACC eat
kann [FR *ich mag*]
can.1SG I.NOM like.1SG

'I think that I can eat what I like.' (Assmann 2013: 209)

However, (iv) agreement between the wh-pronoun and a probe in the matrix clause and (v) extraction out of the wh-phrase agreement point to the opposite conclusion, namely that the wh- pronoun is located outside the embedded clause and it is part of the external nominal projection. A plural wh-pronoun in a free RC triggers plural number agreement in the matrix clause (Bresnan & Grimshaw 1978; Caponigro 2003; Assmann 2013), as shown in (5).

(5) [FR welche Bücher ich auch immer gelesen habe],
which book.pl I also ever read have.1sg
haben/*hat mir gefallen
have.pl/*have.3sg cl.1sg.dat liked

'I liked whatever books I read.' (Assmann 2013: 206)

Nothing can be extracted out of a free RC (6a), unless it is part of the wh-phrase (6b) (Rooryck 1994; Ott 2011; Assmann 2013). This is illustrated with topicalization in German.

(6) a. * *Diesen Lesern*$_i$ *kaufe ich* [FR *was auch immer*
this.pl reader.pl buy.1sg I what also ever
Der Spiegel t_i *empfiehlt*]
Der Spiegel suggest.3sg

'As for these readers, I buy whatever Der Spiegel recommends to them.'

b. Über dieses Thema$_i$ liest Hans [FR [was für Bücher t_i
about this topic read.3sg Hans what for book.pl
auch immer] Der Spiegel empfiehlt]
also ever Der Spiegel suggest.3sg

'As for this topic, Hans reads whatever Der Spiegel recommends.'
(Ott 2011: 188, 190)

The five properties just outlined are puzzling as the wh-phrase seems to be part of the embedded clause as well as the matrix clause.

This paper develops a novel account of the syntax of free RCs, which is capable of deriving these syntactic properties as well as the three-point of variation concerning the matching requirement. By focusing on languages which tolerate mismatches and on free RCs in non-existential modal constructions, I propose that the direction of case resolution in free RCs depends on the property of the D^0 head and on the mechanisms of feature-sharing between the external D^0 head and the lower heads. I therefore associate case resolution patterns to the typology of Ds à la Longobardi. By adopting the bipartition between strong and weak D^0 outlined in Guardiano & Longobardi (2005), I demonstrate that those languages classified as strong D^0 languages that allow case mismatch configurations can resolve the case conflict in compliance with the external case. Conversely, those languages classified as weak D^0 languages can resolve the case conflict in compliance with the internal case. I further demonstrate that the interplay of the Agree relation between the external D^0 and the wh-pronoun and the subsequent operation of chain reduction accounts for the variation in strict vs. resolutive languages and for why certain, but not other, case resolution patterns are tolerated in resolutive languages. The proposal applies to data concerning various languages, including new data from Old and Modern Italian and some Italian varieties.[4] By

[4] Throughout the paper I refer to Modern Italian as the standard language spoken in Italy nowadays. I follow the traditional philological literature in labeling Medieval Florentine "Old Italian" (see Castellani 2000; Salvi & Renzi 2010). In particular I follow the spirit of the *Grammatica dell'italiano antico* in contrasting Medieval Florentine and Standard Modern Italian and considering them two stages of Italian (Renzi 2004; Salvi & Renzi 2010). Data on Modern Italian are taken from my introspection as a native speaker and verified with fifteen other Italian speakers from different regions

including Modern Italian, Modern Italian varieties, and Old Italian, not only does this paper offer novel data but also provides new case resolutive patterns when the case hierarchy is not obeyed.

The paper is structured as follows. Section 2 illustrates the main ingredients of the novel analysis and derives the first point of variation between strict vs. resolutive languages. Section 3 concentrates on resolutive languages by describing the linguistic variation in case resolution patterns and presents novel data on free RCs in the history of Italian. Section 4 outlines the connection between the direction of case resolution and the general properties of D^0 and further tests this association on the data presented in Section 3. In Section 5 I complete the syntactic proposal for free RCs. Section 6 concludes the paper.

2 The novel analysis of free RCs: core aspects

My proposal is built on a version of the COMP-analysis (Groos & van Riemsdijk 1981; Hirschbühler and Rivero 1981, 1983; Grosu 1994; Kayne 1994; Pittner 1995; Grosu & Landman 1998; among many others). More precisely, I adopt the derivation of free RCs in Cinque (2008, 2013, 2020a,b) and Poletto & Sanfelici (2014, 2018) which I further refine. In Section 2.1 I illustrate the core aspects of the syntactic analysis: free RCs are similar to restrictive RCs in that they contain two non-distinct NPs, but they involve only raising. Section 2.2 concentrates on the relation between the two non-distinct NPs highlighting the differences between restrictive and free RCs. In this section, I account for the first point of variation in the matching requirement which identifies strict matching vs. case resolutive languages. Concretely, I only concentrate on free RCs in non-modal-existential constructions, thus on free RCs that have the distribution and interpretation of definite DPs (Caponigro 2004).

2.1 The syntax of free RCs: main ingredients

As in the cartographic literature, my proposal incorporates two fundamental aspects: (a) the syntactic representation is "bare", i.e., no bar level distinctions are expressed, as in Chomsky (1995: ch.4); (b) the syntactic representation obeys antisymmetry (Cinque 2013: ch.2). As in Cinque's works, my analysis builds on Kayne's version of c-command according to which specifiers are adjuncts and an XP in Spec,ZP can c-command out of the ZP (Kayne 1994: 16, 25–26): "X c-commands Y iff X and Y are categories, and X excludes Y and every category that dominates X dominates Y" (p.16). Although specifiers are adjuncts, for ease of exposure I continue using the label "specifier", Spec,CP, Spec,FP, and Spec,DP to refer to an XP merged as an adjunct respectively to CP, FP, and DP.

(Emilia Romagna, Lombardy, Piedmont, Sicily, Tuscany, and Veneto) in order to avoid dialectal influences.

The derivation of free RCs adopted is the one proposed in Cinque (2008, 2013, 2020a,b), and refined in Poletto & Sanfelici (2014, 2018), which include the following relevant aspects. I walk the reader through each step.

(i) free RCs, as well as restrictive RCs, are clauses embedded under a DP. They are merged as CPs in the specifier of a prenominal functional projection FP1, above the projections which host attributive adjectives and numerals and below the projections hosting strong determiners (Kayne 1994; Cinque 2013: 172, 197).

(ii) RCs involve two non-distinct nominal elements (Hulsey & Sauerland 2006; Cinque 2013, 2020a,b), one merged inside the RC and the other merged outside the RC in the nominal spine, which is modified by the RC. Adopting Cinque's terminology, I label the former internal Head and the latter external Head, thereby using the term Head with capital letter when I refer to the nominal phrase that the RC modifies and the one that is relativized.

(iii) The external Head in free RCs is a classifier-like element of the type PERSON, THING, PLACE, TIME, which is the smallest component of a nominal expression (Kayne 2005; Cinque 2020a).[5] For ease of exposure I label it NP.

(iv) Since the internal Head is an argument of the RC-predicate and a nominal expression is an argument only if it is introduced by a category D^0 (Szabolcsi 1987; Stowell 1989; Caponigro 2000, 2004; Longobardi 2008), the internal Head is a DP, more specifically an indefinite DP (Bianchi 1999; Cinque 2008). In addition, I assume that the wh-element is endowed with a quantificational [Q] and a relative [rel] feature, following Caponigro (2000) and Rizzi (2004). This is captured in cartography by proposing an articulated structure as in (37) where the wh-element lexicalizes the heads Q^0, Rel, and D^0, and takes as complement an NP non-distinct from the external NP.

(v) Whereas restrictive RC can be both derived via raising and matching (Carlson 1977; Sauerland 2003; Cinque 2008, 2015; Sichel 2018), free RCs are un-controversially derived via raising as the presence of reconstruction effects and island sensitivity attested in free RCs cross-linguistically demonstrates (Bianchi 1999; Cinque 2020a a.o.).[6]

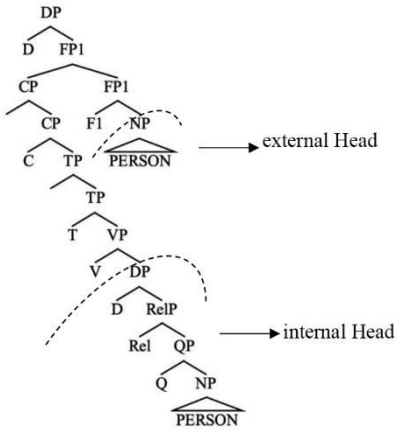
I exemplify the points (i) to (v) in the tree (7).[7]

[5] In Cinque's terms the two Heads are labeled dPs. In other cartographic and nano-syntactic studies, the smaller component of a nominal expression is identified in the category *n*, the nominal core, which substitutes Kaynian null categories (Baunaz & Lander 2018). For the purpose of this paper, these are notational variants of the label NP.

[6] Citko (2001) argues that condition C effects are absent in English free RCs, but many studies have disputed these judgments (e.g., Sauerland 2003; Takahashi & Hulsey 2009: 412). Likewise, Daskalaki (2009: 73) reports that Condition C is weaker in Greek free RCs but she notices that free RCs show reconstructions effects with respect to other diagnostics, namely variable binding, scope alternations, and idioms. Given these observations and the great amount of literature showing that reconstruction effects are detected in free RCs (see Gračanin-Yuksek 2008; Cinque 2020a and references therein), I conclude that free RCs can only be derived via raising.

[7] The fact that free RCs only involve a raising derivation is exemplified in (7) through the lack of the FP2 projection above FP1, which in Cinque's model is the landing site of the external Head in matching derivations. In cartographic terms, the tree in (7) amounts to say that no scattering between F2 and F1 occurs and thus, there only is a unified F^0 (on the no scattering of functional projections, see Rizzi 1997: 312–315).

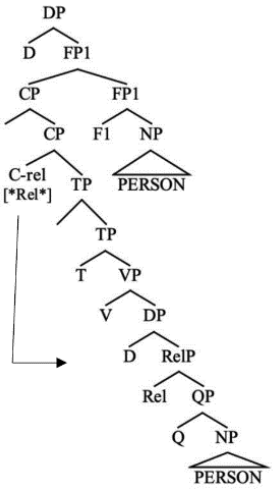
(7)



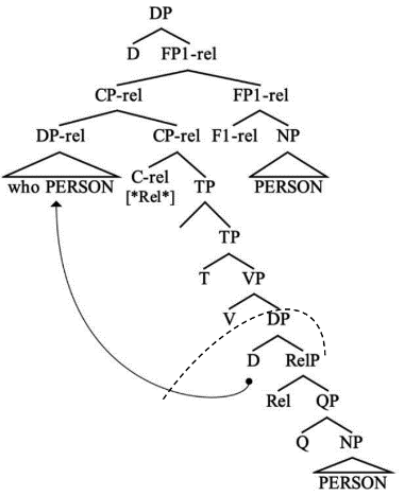
(vi) The C^0 head is specified for a probing feature [*Rel*] and finds its goal in the internal Head, which has the feature [Rel]. The internal Head enters an Agree relation with C^0 and adjoins to CP. I follow Rizzi (2004) in proposing that the feature [Rel] is a criterial feature. After the internal Head moves to Spec,CP, a criterial configuration is created which involves: DP-relative, CP, C^0. As in Rizzi (2015), the head and the specifiers involved in a criterial configuration agree for the criterial feature, which is shared onto their labels.

(vii) Given the cartographic approach, an FP with an XP as its adjunct/specifier should be of the same type as the XP. Hence, since CP is the specifier/adjunct of FP1 and CP has the criterial feature [Rel], the same criterial feature [Rel] must also be shared by $F1^0$ and FP1. This is formalized by proposing that F1 has a probing [*Rel*] feature that finds its goal in the CP-rel. Therefore, a second criterial configuration sharing the same criterial feature [Rel] is superimposed: CP, FP1, and $F1^0$. I illustrate points (vi) and (vii) in the tree (8). I add the hyphen -rel to the heads and phrases involved in the two criterial configurations. I illustrate the Agree relation between C-rel and the wh-phrase in (8a), while I depict the movement of DP-rel to Spec,CP-rel and the final step of the derivation in which two criterial configurations are created in (8b).

(8) a.



b.



Under Kayne's version of c-command, the internal Head in (8) c-commands the external NP. Let me apply Kayne's definition of c-command to (8). DP-rel and the external Head NP are categories. No segment of DP-rel dominates the external NP, hence, the former excludes the latter. In addition, DP-rel is not included in CP-rel: it is included in one of its segments. CP-rel is not included in FP1-rel: only one segment of FP1-rel includes CP-rel. Both the external NP and DP-rel are dominated by the same categories, i.e., the external higher DP. Hence, DP-rel asymmetrically c- commands the external NP and everything dominated by it. Furthermore, given Kayne's version of c-command and the adjunct status of specifiers, in (8), DP-rel is in the local domain of the external D^0 and there is no intervening head for the purpose of Relativized Minimality. Hence, the external D^0 and DP-rel

are in a local configuration and they can establish a relation (see also Bianchi 2000).

Interestingly, according to the derivation in (8), free RCs in non-modal-existential constructions are merged above numerals and below strong quantifiers. Hence, the external D^0 in (8) qualifies as the definite D^0. Indeed, as expected, in various languages a definite determiner introduces free RCs (Caponigro 2019; Cinque 2020a).

(9) a. Lakota (Williamson 1989: 189 fn.4)
[DP [CP *Mary kağe*] ***ki***] *ophewathų*
Mary make the buy.1SG

'lit. I bought the what Mary made.' / 'I bought what Mary made.'

b. Yucatec Maya (Gutíerrez-Bravo 2013: 29)
[DP Le [CP ba'ax k-in tsikbal-t-ik-ø
the what HAB-ERG.1SG chat-TRNS-IND-ABS.3SG
te'ex]-a']
2PL-CL

'lit. the what I'm saying to you.' / 'The thing which I'm telling you about.'

c. Wolof (Caponigro 2000: ex.14)
door-naa [DP [CP *ki nga begg*] (***ki***)]
hit-1SG who 2SG.SBJ love the

'lit. I hit (the) who you love.' / 'I hit who you love.'

d. Ch'ol (Vázquez Álvarez & Coon 2021: ch.11, ex.5)
Tyi k-mäñ-ä-ø [DP ***li*** [CP *chu choñkol i-choñ-ø*
PFV A1-buy-TV-B3 DET what PROG A3-sell-B3
aj-Maria]
CLF-Maria

'lit. I bought the what Maria is selling.' / 'I bought what Maria is selling.'

e. English (Nakamura 2009: fn.14)
A pocket money allowance of pounds 14.10 is set for [DP *all* ***the*** [CP *who receive state help towards their nursing home fees*]].
(The Observer, Apr 27, 1997)

Notice that the examples in (9) are problematic for the Head analyses which postulate that the wh- pronoun is located in the D^0 head or in Spec,DP (Bresnan & Grimshaw 1978; Larson 1987; Citko 2004, among others). Likewise, these data cannot easily be handled by the reprojection analyses which posit that the wh-pronoun reprojects a DP after transfer of the C^0 head and its complement applies (Donati 2006; Chomsky 2008; Citko 2008; Donati & Cecchetto 2011; Ott 2011).