

What's in a C? On restrictive subject relatives

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This paper explores the syntactic status of subject relativizers in restrictive relative clauses in both standard and dialectal Italian varieties. In the spirit of much recent work on complementizers (Kayne (2008), Manzini and Savoia (2003, 2011)), our general aim is to show that what we call complementizers are actually not C° heads but they originate as modifiers of the internal relative dP head (see Cinque (2013) for an analysis that foresees that all relative clauses are originally matching relatives). This is particularly clear in restrictive subject relatives, which display a distinct position in the CP for the relativized subject and a nominal agreement pattern on the “complementizer” (from now on “relativizer”) which allows us to prove our point. We thus examine the exact structural position of the subject relativizer within a split restrictive relative CP and show that its feature specification is different from the one generally found in the agreement pattern in the TP and crucially includes features which can only be of nominal origin. We will investigate specific agreement patterns: several Italian varieties display a special relativizer for subject extraction like Friulian and Marebbano, as in (4a), which differs from the unmarked form of the relativizer found in other extractions (4b) as well as in complement clauses (4c).

- (4) a. *La ëra co puzenëia les stighes è püra*
“The lady that cleans the staircase is ill.”
b. *La ëra che te ás encunté ennier cianta pal cor*
“The lady you met yesterday sings in the chorus.”
c. *I jogn dij ch'al mangia massa cern*
“The boys tell that he eats too much meat.” (San Vigilio di Marebbe)

This agreement pattern is not identical to the one of French, as its morphology changes according to subject features like deixis, animacy, and gender, as in Old Neapolitan which displays *chi* with a masculine antecedent (5a) and *che* with a feminine one (5b).

- (5) a. *uno romano chi se chamao Cornelio nepote de lo grande Salustio*
“A Roman that is named Cornelio, nephew of the great Sallustio [...]” (LDT 47)
b. *considerate le cose maravegliose che nce foro facte e dicte*
“Considered the marvelous things that were made and said [...]” (LDT 47)

On the basis of the agreement patterns found in Italian varieties, we will propose that relativizers are first merged as modifiers of a dP head, with whom they agree, and then are subextracted from the relative subject head. This idea will be further strengthened during the talk by a) the analysis of cases of non-subject extraction in dialects which use a distal agreeing demonstrative as the relativizer and b) the following empirical generalization: there are no dialects that use the form *qual-* as an adjective wh- in interrogatives and display it as a relativizer. The generalization can only be explained by assuming that *qual-* is always an adjectival form, both in interrogatives

and relatives and when its adjectival use disappears it does so in both interrogatives and relatives.

Hence, our findings on “inflected complementizers” not only challenge the standard dichotomy between complementizers and relative pronouns as first proposed by Klima (1964) and Kayne (1975), suggesting that relativizers are in fact a kind of relative pronoun as recently stated in Manzini & Savoia (2003, 2011) and Kayne (2008), but go even further, since we do not claim that all relativizers, including our subject relativizers are pronouns, but that they are quantificational adjectives, i.e. they are originally merged with the internal head and then moved to the relative CP.

Selected References

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