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Carlo Cecchetto, Caterina Donati

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Relative clauses in Romance

Carlo Cecchetto and Caterina Donati

Summary

Relative clauses are subordinate clauses acting as nominal modifiers. They can be finite or non-finite in Romance, with finite relative clauses largely more productive and widespread across varieties. Relative clauses contain an empty position, that can correspond to a gap (as in most standard varieties) or to a resumptive pronoun, as in Romanian and in many substandard varieties. In most Romance languages, relative clauses are introduced either by the invariant element *che/que* or by some relative pronoun (*il quale/lequel/el cual...*) depending on the grammatical function of the variable it refers to.

Keywords:

Relative clauses

Gap

Resumptive pronoun

Complementizer

Wh-element

Free relatives

Reduced relatives

Pseudorelatives

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1. Some definitions

Relative clauses are subordinate clauses whose distribution is not clausal and whose interpretation is not propositional. They occur where nominal modifiers or full NPs or PPs occur and receive a similar interpretation. An argument or an adjunct inside the relative clause is obligatorily “null” (i.e., realized as a gap or as a resumptive pronoun). Relative clauses can be finite or non-finite in Romance, with finite ones largely more productive and widespread across varieties. This chapter will mainly focus on the latter, and only briefly describe the former in a devoted paragraph towards the end (§4.2). The NP that the relative clause modifies, when it is present, is called the head, or the antecedent of the relative clause (RC).

Relative clauses in Romance are post nominal, in that they follow the head, as illustrated in (1) in Italian¹.

- (1) Ho letto [NP il libro [RC che mi avevi consigliato [e]]]
 have.1SG read the book that me.dat had.2SG recommended
 ‘I read the book you had recommended to me’

In (1) the RC *che mi avevi consigliato* modifies the head NP *il libro*, which is external and precedes the RC. This configuration is usually referred to as externally headed post nominal relative clauses. There are no attested internally headed relative clauses in Romance, nor prenominal ones, therefore we do not discuss them here.

Relative clauses with an external head contain a “null” position related to the modified nominal phrase. This position can correspond to a gap (as in 1) or to a resumptive pronoun, as in (2) in Romanian.

- (2) Băiatul pe care îl vezi
 Boy-DEF PE who cl.1SG see.1SG
 ‘The boy I see’

In (1), the object position of the embedded verb *consigliato* (‘recommend’) contains a gap, which corresponds to the head NP, *libro* (‘book’). In the Romanian example, the object position is filled by a pronominal proclitic, which corresponds to the head NP, *băiatul* (‘boy’). These two examples illustrate the two main strategies for the realization of the null position of relative clauses that are attested in Romance, which we will examine in details in § 3.

The position of the null element can vary: the two examples just discussed in (1) and (2) are cases of object relative clauses, given that the null element is in object position. (3) is a subject relative clause in Spanish; (4) illustrates an oblique RC in French; (5) a possessive RC in Catalan. Finally, the example in (6) displays a predicative RC in Portuguese. In all these examples, the variable corresponds to a gap, as signalled by the notation [e].

- (3) Encontré al profesor que [e] escribió este libro.
 Met.1SG to-the professor that wrote.1SG this book
 ‘I met the professor who wrote this book’ *Subject RC Spanish*
- (4) Voici le livre dont je t’ai parlé [e].
 Here the book DONT I CL.2SG have.1SG talked
 ‘Here is the book I told you about’ *Oblique RC: French*
- (5) Vou parlar amb aquella noia el pare de la qual [e] és metge.
 Go.1SG talk with that girl the father of the which is doctor
 ‘I am going to talk with the girl whose father is a doctor’ *Possessive RC: Catalan*
- (6) Não é o homem elegante que era [e].
 Not is the man elegant that was.1SG
 ‘He’s not the elegant man he used to be’ *Predicative RC: Portuguese*

In some cases, when the modified NP contains a noun that can take an argument, it is only the presence of this empty position that distinguishes a relative clause from a complement clause, as illustrated in (7’) in Italian (and 7’’ in English).

- (7’) a. [DP la dichiarazione che il presidente ha rilasciato ai giornalisti]
 the statement that the president has released to=the journalists

- b. [DP la dichiarazione che il presidente ha rilasciato i giornalisti]]
 the statement that the president has released the journalists

- (7'') a. The statement that the president has released to the journalists
 b. The statement that the president released the journalists

In (7') the element introducing the RC or the complement clause, *che*, is superficially identical (as is *that* in English in 7''), so that the two structures are ambiguous up to the point of the position of the object of the verb. This temporary ambiguity and how it is processed on-line has been recently investigated with respect to Italian RCs (Vernice et al. 2016). See also Staub et al. (2018) for a similar study on English.

In all the examples reported so far, the head of the relative is a full NP. These are usually called full relatives or headed relatives, as opposed to free or headless relatives, like (8) in Italian, which will be discussed in § 4.1.

- (8) Chi mi ama mi segue
 Who me loves me follows=SUBJ
 'Who loves me follows me'

Going back to full relatives, we must distinguish restrictive and appositive relatives. The main difference is semantic, and has to do with the function of the relative clause with respect to the head, but it also has some syntactic consequences in Romance.

Restrictive relatives, such as (9) in French, modify the noun and its other modifiers and contribute a restriction to the nominal denotation. In other words, a restrictive RC delimits the set of possible objects which the head refers to.

- (9) L'étudiant qui a lu le manuel a passé l'expérience
 The student who has read the manual has passed the experiment
 'The student who read the manual did the experiment'

The example in (9), for example, presupposes that there is a set of students, and identifies one of them by saying that the relevant student is the one that read the manual.

Appositive relatives, like (10) in French for example, affect the whole NP, including the determiner, and they contribute additional secondary information without modifying the nominal denotation.

- (10) L'étudiant, qui a lu le manuel, a passé l'expérience
 The student who has read the manual has passed the experiment
 'The student, who read the manual, did the experiment'

The relative clause in (10) does not identify any particular student out of a set, it simply gives an additional information, namely that this independently identified student read the manual.

As the examples in French above make clear, Romance languages do not exhibit a clearly separated syntax for restrictive and appositive relative clauses. In (9) and (10) the difference is prosodic, with a break signalled by the comma in (10) separating the head and the appositive RC. Some other differences concern the distribution of the various relativizing elements in the two types of clauses, a point to which we shall go back. When not overtly specified, all we will say in the rest of the chapter should be interpreted as referring to restrictive relative clauses.

A third type of relative clause has been identified by Carlson (1977), who calls it "amount relative". This type is superficially similar to a restrictive relative, but it is semantically distinct in that the head and the relative clause jointly denote not a set of individuals, but a set of amounts. This interpretation emerges most clearly in examples like (11), in which the NP modified by the relative denotes an abstract quantity of wine, rather than a concrete instantiation of wine.

- (11) Il nous faudrait une année entière pour boire le vin que Jean a bu l'autre soir.
 It us need.1SG a year complete to drink the wine that Jean has drunk the other night
 'We would need an entire year to drink the wine that Jean drank last night'

No clear syntactic difference distinguishes amount relatives from (other) restrictive relatives in Romance, and this is why we shall not go back to this type.

Three properties will be discussed in details and will govern the organization of the article:

- the nature of the relativizer elements, which can be explicit (§ 2.1) or absent, as in reduced relatives (§ 2.2);
- the nature of the empty element (§ 3);
- the nature of the head (§4).

2. The nature and distribution of relativizers

Most relatives in Romance are introduced by some special element that we shall call a relativizer (§2.1). Reduced relatives, that contain no such element and exhibit an impoverished participial verb form (§2.2), are an exception.

2.1. Relatives with explicit relativizers

Potentially, the element introducing a RC does at least one of three things:

- signal the subordination clause that follows
- signal the function/position of the null element
- agrees with the head NP.

The traditional way of presenting relativizers in Romance is by portioning them into two categories: on one hand, the linker *che/que* and its kin, which are typically uninflected for case or any other phi-features related to the head and to the null element, and only signals subordination. On the other hand, a set of pronominal elements more or less homophonous to interrogative pronouns or *wh*-elements, typically agreeing in gender and number with the head noun and carrying along some preposition selected in the gap position.

Starting from Central Romance, and in particular French and Italian, we observe that the two categories of elements are in strict complementary distribution: in bare positions, only *che/que* is possible (with its variant *qui* in subject position: see below); in oblique positions, i.e. preceded by a preposition, only *wh*-elements are possible.

Table 1. The distribution of relativizers in French and Italian

	French	Italian
Subject position 'The letter that arrived yesterday'	Qui La lettre qui est arrivée hier	Che La lettera che è arrivata ieri

	*le/la quel.le *La lettre laquelle est arrivée hier	Il/la quale *La lettera la quale è arrivata ieri
Object position 'The letter that I received yesterday'	Que La lettre que j'ai reçue hier	Che La lettera che ho ricevuto ieri
	*le/la quel.le *La lettre laquelle j'ai reçue hier	*Il/la quale *La lettera la quale ho ricevuto ieri
Oblique 'The letter about which I think' 'The girl about whom I think'	quin, le/la quel.le La lettre à laquelle je pense La fille à qui/à laquelle je pense	cui, Il/la quale La lettera/la ragazza a cui/alla quale penso.
	*Que *La lettre à que je pense	*che *La lettera a che penso
Prepositional 'The letter about which I told you'	Dont, de le/la quel.le La lettre dont/de laquelle je t'ai parlé	Cui, il/la quale La lettera di cui/della quale ti ho parlato
Locative 'The city where I'll go'	où La ville où j'irai	dove La città dove andrò

Things are slightly different in Iberian varieties, and in particular Spanish, Portuguese and Catalan: while the bare form is always and only *que*, its distribution is not complementary with the wh-elements in that *que* is also allowed to a certain extent with prepositions. Some of examples of this oblique use of *que* are given in (12) for Spanish and (13) for Portuguese.

- (12) a. El bolígrafo con (el) que escribo todas mis cartas
The pen with (the) that write.1SG all.fem.PL my letters
'The pen with which I write all my letters.'
- b. Un diario para (el) que trabajo a tiempo completo
A newspaper for (the) that work.1SG at time full
'A newspaper for which I work full time'

(Brucart 1992: 115)ⁱⁱ

- (13) a. O cão a que Fizeste festas Fujiu.
The dog to that did.2SG caresses fled
'The dog you caressed fled'

(Brito & Duarte 2003: 663)

- b. O país em que eu vivi mais tempo foi o Japão
The country in that I lived.1SG more time was the Japan
'The country in which I lived longer was Japan'

(Velooso 2013: 2088)

- c. A pessoa com que o professor conversou
The person with that the professor talked.1SG
'The person with whom the professor is talking'

Catalan resembles the other Iberian varieties in allowing some oblique use of a *que* form. When preceded by a preposition, however, *que* is written with a diacritic (*què*) that is supposed to signal its tonic status, as opposed to the unstressed nature of the bare *que*.

- (14) a. El llibre que vam llegir l'any passat
 the book that PAST.1PL read the year passed
 'The book we read last year'
- b. El llibre de què et vaig parlar ahir
 the book of that CL.DAT.2SG PAST.1SG speak yesterday
 'the book about which I told you yesterday'

(Brucart 1992: 132)

Table 2. Comparing the distribution of *ke* in French and Italian vs. Spanish, Portuguese and Catalan.

	Subject	object	predicate	oblique	De PP	locative
French/Italian						
que	+	+	+	-	-	-
wh	-	-	-	+	+	+
Spanish/Portuguese						
que	+	+	+	+	+	+
wh	-	-	-	+	+	+
Catalan						
que	+	+	+	+ què	+ què	+ què
wh	-	-	-	+	+	+

Before turning to Romanian, which displays a different pattern, let us focus on the nature of *che/que*, which has raised much debate. There are two possible analyses for this element. According to a first account, *che/que* corresponds to a *wh*-element, the *wh*-element that we find in interrogatives in all Romance varieties, both alone and used as a *wh*-determiner akin to *which*. According to the second account, *che-que* is a complementizer. Consider the *wh*-element *che-que* in (15).

- (15)a. Que vas-tu faire ? French
 KE FUT.2SG-you do
- b. Che farai? Italian
 KE do.2SG?
- c. Qué vas hacer? Spanish
 KE FUT.2SG do
- d. (o) que vais fazer? Portuguese
 (the) KE FUT.2SG do
- e. Què vas a fer Catalan
 KE FUT.2SG to do
 'What are you going to do?'

Identifying the relative *che/que* with an interrogative would make the description of Romance relative clauses very simple: in all cases, the RC is introduced by a *wh*-element, dislocated at the edge of the relative clause from its base position where it leaves a gap, possibly agreeing in its landing site with the head of the construction (see Bianchi 2002 for an overview).

- (16) a. La ragazza_i [*che*_{iwh} [ho visto [t_{wh}]
The girl KE have.1SG seen
- b. La ragazza_i [[PP con la quale_{iwh}] [ho parlato [t_{PPwh}]
The girl with the whom have.1SG talked

However, there are a number of properties of *che/que* that go against this analysis. The following examples shows this for Italian: relative *que/che* is not restricted as for the +/-human feature while interrogative *che/que* is –human, at least when used intransitively: (17); relative *che/que* cannot be preceded by a preposition, while interrogative *che/que* can (at least in some varieties: 18); relative *che/que* is incompatible with a non-finite clause, unlike the interrogative *che/que* (19).ⁱⁱⁱ

- (17) a. #Che hai incontrato?
KE have.2SG met
‘What have you met?’
- b. La ragazza che ho incontrato
The girl KE have.1SG met
‘The girl that I met’
- (18) a. Di che libro stai parlando?
Of KE book are.2SG talking
‘About what book are you talking?’
- b. *Il libro di che stai parlando
the book of KE are.2SG talking
- (19) a. Non so che fare
not know.1SG KE do.INF
‘I don’t know what to do’
- b. *Cerco un libro che leggere
Search.1SG a book KE read.INF
- c. Cerco un libro da leggere
Search.1SG a book from read.INF
‘I am looking for a book to read’

All these properties support the second account, according to which *che/que* is more similar to the complementizer that introduces subordinated inflected clauses. Under this account, *che/que* is expected to be invariable and insensitive to phi-features, at least in main Romance varieties^{iv}. The incompatibility of relative *che/que* with prepositions also follows directly if it is a complementizer: in most (Romance) varieties, the complementizer is indeed incompatible with a preposition: (20a) and (20b) illustrate this for Italian and French respectively.

- (20) a. Sono contenta (*di) che tu mi abbia invitata
Am happy.FEM of KE you CL.ACC.1SG have.SUBJ.2SG invited.FEM
- b. Je suis contente (*de) que tu m’aies invitée

I am happy.FEM of KE you CL.ACC.1SG= have.SUBJ.2SG invited.FEM
 ‘I am happy that you invited me’

Even more strikingly, in Spanish, where we have seen that relative *que* can be preceded by a preposition, this is also true of the complementizer, confirming the tight relation of these two elements.

(21) Estoy contenta de que tu me hayas invitado
 Am happy.FEM of KE you CL.ACC.1SG have.SUBJ.2SG invited.FEM
 ‘I am happy that you invited me’

(Donati 1995)

Furthermore, the very language, French, which has an allomorph of *que* with subject gap (*qui*) in relatives, displays the same allomorph for the complementizer *que* under the same conditions, as shown in (22)^v.

(22) a. La revue qui [e] est parue hier
 The journal that is appeared.FEM.1SG yesterday
 ‘The journal that came out yesterday’
 b. Quelle revue penses-tu qui [e] est parue hier?
 Which journal think.2SG =you that is appeared. FEM. 1SG yesterday
 ‘Which journal do you think came out yesterday?’

A further piece of evidence that seems to push towards an identification of relative *che/que* with the complementizer *che/que*, comes from those varieties that allow so-called Doubly filled COMP, that is allow for the simultaneous realization at the periphery of the clause of both a *wh*-element and a complementizer (an option that is barred from standard European varieties). An illustration from Quebec French is given in (23).

(23) Je me demande quand qu’il est parti adapted from Bianchi (1999: 220)
 I me wonder.1SG when that he is left
 ‘I wonder when he left’

If bare *que/qui* were a *wh*-element, we would expect it to be compatible with the complementizer *que* in relative clauses, as appears to be the case in interrogatives (23): but this is not possible in Quebec French: (24).

(24) *La fille qui que t’aime bien (Kayne 1976 : 275)
 The girl that that.CL.ACC.2SG=loves good
 ‘The girl who likes you’

The ungrammaticality of (24) is expected on the other hand if *qui* and *que* are both complementizers given that double complementizers are not possible in Quebec French in general.

For all these reasons the standard analysis has long been that relative *che/que* is the complementizer. In its first formulation (due to Kayne 1976), the complementary distribution of *che/que* and *wh*-elements was explained with a deletion operation applying under identity: when the *wh*-element is bare, it is identical to the head, and gets thus deleted; when it is embedded under a preposition, it is not identical to the head and hence cannot be deleted. The

(25) a. [la [_{NP} lettre] [_{CP} [_{NP} ~~Wh-element~~] que j'ai recue [e]]]
 The letter that I=have.1SG received
 b. [la [_{NP} lettre] [_{CP} [_{PP} à laquelle] je pense [e]]]
 The letter to whom I=have.1SG think

(26) a. [la _[NP lettre_i] [[_[NP Op_i] que j'ai reçue [e]]]
 b. [la _[NP lettre_i] [[_[PP à laquelle_i] je pense [e]]]

(27) a. a. [la [_{CP/NP} lettre;_i] que j'ai recue [_i]]
 b. [la [_{CP/NP} lettre;_i] [_{PP} à laquelle [_i]_k [je pense [_k]]]

Turning now to Romanian, restrictive relatives follow a different system in this language, not displaying any split between bare and prepositional positions in the distribution of relativizers. In every position, the *wh*-element *care* ('who/which') is possible, preceded or not by a preposition, or even inflected for case (dative)^{vii}.

9

- boy-DEF who knows details-DEF
 ‘The boy who knows the details.’
 (29) Băiatul pe care [e] îl vezi *Object RC*
 boy-DEF PE who CL.1SG see.2SG
 ‘The boy whom you see’

In (29) notice that an object clitic is obligatory in the position of the null element. The same is true in dative relative clauses, as illustrated in (30). We shall come back to this feature in the next section (§3).

- (30) Arată-mi mama Căreia fata îi dă o floare *Dative RC*
 Show-me mother which.DAT.FEM.SG girl CL.DAT gives a flower
 ‘Show me the mother to whom the girl gives a flower.’

Alongside this unmarked strategy, Romanian also marginally allows a complementizer construction, with the invariable element *ce*, and once again this is restricted to bare positions, suggesting a strong parallelism with the pattern just described for *che/que*. In Romanian however it obligatorily involves a resumptive pronoun (Dobrovie Sorin 1994 : 214).

Before turning to the nature of the null element, a short notice on appositive relative clauses: in all Romance languages the more or less strict complementarity between *che/que* and *wh*-elements that we have just described does not hold in appositives, where a bare *wh*-element is systematically available: this is probably the main syntactic property teasing apart appositive from restrictive RCs on a superficial level.

2.2. Reduced relatives

Reduced relatives (also called participial relatives) are relative construction that are spread across Romance varieties and contain a verb phrase modifying a head noun. They are reduced because they do not contain either a complementizer of the *che/que* type or a relative pronoun and because they present a verbal form that is not fully inflected for tense, typically a past participle. (31b) is a reduced relative that corresponds to the full relative in (31a).

- (31) a. Le philosophe qui a été admiré par Marx *French*
 The philosopher that has been admired by Marx
 b. Le philosophe admiré par Marx
 The philosopher admired.PART-MASC by Marx
 ‘The philosopher admired by Marx’

The distribution of reduced relatives is more constrained than that of full relatives. To begin with, they can only be subject relatives, never object relatives (cf. 32).

- (32) a. Le philosophe qui a admiré Marx
 The philosopher that has admired Marx
 b. * Le philosophe admiré Marx
 The philosopher admired.PART-MASC Marx

As extensively discussed in a literature stemming from Burzio (1986), reduced relatives in Romance are grammatical only with certain types of predicates. In particular, Burzio (1986)

showed that, at least in Italian, reduced relatives are grammatical with passive (cf. 33) and unaccusative (cf. 34) verbs, while they are totally out with unergative verbs (35).

- (33) La ragazza amata da Gianni
 The-FEM girl-FEM loved.PART-FEM by Gianni
 ‘The girl loved by Gianni’
- (34) Il ragazzo arrivato ieri
 The-MASC boy-MASC arrived. PART-MASC yesterday
 ‘The boy arrived yesterday’
- (35) *Il ragazzo starnutito ieri
 The-MASC boy-MASC sneezed PART-MASC yesterday

The context in which reduced relatives are allowed in Italian are exactly those in which the past participle combines with auxiliary ‘be’. This may not be coincidental. In fact, Iatridou, Anagnostopoulou, and Izvorski (2001) claim that across all Indo-European languages reduced relatives cannot contain a past participial if the missing auxiliary is ‘have’. Although this generalization is fairly solid, they point out an exception in Spanish. Reduced relatives are possible for (possibly a subset of) unaccusatives, even if unaccusatives take ‘have’ as an auxiliary in this language.

- (36) Las chicas [recen llegadas a la estacion] son mis hermanas
 The girls [recently arrived.FEM.PL at the station] are my sisters
 ‘The girls who have just arrived at the station are my sisters.’

3. The nature of the null element: resumptive strategies

As for the realization of the null element contained in the RC, we have seen that there are two possibilities:

1. a gap
2. a resumptive pronoun

In most standard European varieties, with the exception of Romanian, the gap strategy is the unmarked, or “conventional” option, the only one that is acknowledged by normative grammars. All Romance languages do exhibit however a (possibly non-standard) alternative strategy including *che/que* and a resumptive pronoun, at least in some relativisation positions. In this section, we shall have a look at the distribution of these resumptive strategies across Romance varieties.

Before proceeding, let us clarify a point: what we are going to talk about is what Sells (1994) calls “real” resumptive pronouns, namely pronouns that are constrained language-specifically and have a clear grammatical distribution. We shall not consider another type of resumptives, that Sells calls “intrusive”, and that are only possible across languages as a last resort strategy in configurations where a gap would be ungrammatical. An example of such intrusive pronoun is given in (37) for Italian.

- (37) Questo è il ragazzo che il poliziotto che l’ha picchiato deve essere sospeso
 This is the guy that the cop that CL.1SG=has beaten must be suspended.
 ‘This is the guy that the cop who beat him up must be suspended.’
 (Beltrama and Xiang 2016:8)

Given their last resort and partially language independent availability, we will not discuss intrusive pronouns any further.

Returning to real resumptives, Brazilian Portuguese is an example of a Romance variety other than Romanian where the resumptive strategy has become the norm and exhibits a strict distribution: all oblique positions are realized through invariable *que* and an obligatory resumptive; the resumptive is optional in object position and is ungrammatical in subject position.

- (38)
- | | |
|--|--------------|
| a. O homem que (*ele) ama a Maria | (Subject) |
| the man that (he) loves the Maria | |
| 'the man who loves Maria' | |
| b. O homem que eu vi (ele) | (Object) |
| the man that I saw (him) | |
| 'the man that I saw' | |
| c. O homem que eu vi a mulher d'*(ele) | (possessive) |
| the man that I saw the wife of-him | |
| 'the man whose wife I saw' | |
| d. O homem que eu conversei com *(ele) | (Oblique) |
| the man that I talked with (him) | |
| 'the man that talked with' | |
- (Grolla 2005)

A pattern very similar to the one just illustrated in Brazilian Portuguese is not extraneous from European varieties either. Across all varieties, at a more or less substandard or colloquial register, a similar *che/que* plus resumptive construction is a productive strategy alternative to “conventional” construction involving pied piping of the *wh*-element described in the previous section (Suñer 1998).

Some examples from Italian and French are reported below (Italian examples from Mulas 2001; French examples from Zribi-Hertz 1984 and Gadet 1989:3, quoted in Cardinaletti and Guasti 2003).

- (39) Italian
- a. *Indirect object*
 Sono un tipo che gli piace rischiare
 Am a type that CL.1SG.DAT pleases risk.INF
- b. *Locative*
 E' una libreria che ci vado ogni tanto
 Is a bookstore that CL.LOC go.1SG sometimes
- c. *Other obliques*
 E' il coltello che ci ho tagliato la torta
 Is the knife that CL.LOC have.1SG cut the cake
- d. *Possessive*
 Il dirigente che la sua fabbrica ha chiuso qualche mese fa
 The leader that the his factory has closed some months ago
- (40) a. *subject*
 Voici le courier qu'il est arrivé ce soir
 Here the mail that CL.NOM. 1SG is arrived tonight
- b. *indirect object*
 Voici l'homme que Marie lui a parlé

Here the man that Marie CL.DAT.3SG has spoken

c. *Other obliques*

Voici la maison que Marie y pense encore

Here the house that Marie CL.LOC think.3SG still

d. *Possessive*

La femme que son mari est mort hier

The woman that her husband is died yesterday

Some more scattered examples in Catalan (Hirshbühler and Rivero 1981: 596) and in Spanish (Vicente 2004) are given below.

- (41) Es un riu que s'hi ha negat molta gent.
is a river that CL.LOC have3SG drowned many people

- (42) La persona que los apuntes son suyos puede pasar a recogerlos
the person that the classnotes are his/hers can come to pick-up- CL.3PL
'The person who owns the class notes can come to pick them up'

In general, clear quantitative data are not available on the distribution of the resumptive strategy in Romance, but a number of observations support the conclusion that it is commonly used in spoken colloquial language by people of different socio-economic backgrounds, while it is avoided in written texts and in more formal discussion^{viii}. To give an example, Berruto (1980) studied a corpus of Italian spoken in Emilia and found that 30% of object relatives and 79% of indirect object and genitive relatives contained a resumptive pronoun. Among locative relatives, 53% contained a resumptive element, either a preposition (18%) or a clitic pronoun (35%).

While the resumptive strategy is often presented in normative grammars as an incorrect and corrupt usage, it goes back as far as Late Latin, only starting to be stigmatized in the XIV century (Hirshbühler and Rivero 1982; Auger 1993). Its robustness might correlate with the relative marked status of the 'il/la quale'/'Le/la quel.le' forms, scholarly formations that never became the unmarked elements in natural everyday language. In an interesting elicitation study, Cardinaletti and Guasti (2003) show that French and Italian children avoid *wh*-relatives with a preposition and rather opt for resumptive *che/que*-relatives up to the age of 10. Cardinaletti and Guasti suggest that prepositional *wh*-relatives may be the result of educational pressure.

As for the exact distribution of the resumptive across the various relativisation positions, Romance languages seem to differ: while the resumptive seems to be obligatory or at least largely preferred in prepositional positions, its availability in bare positions vary. In subject position, in particular, a resumptive seems grammatical only in some varieties, as in French (Gadet 1989; see 43), in European Portuguese (Alexandre 2000: see 38), and in Peruvian Spanish (Cerrón Palomino 2015), but not in the other (major) Romance languages, including Romanian and Brazilian Portuguese.

- (43) Voici le courrier qu'il est arrivé ce soir
Here the mail that=CL.NOM.1SG is arrived tonight
'Here the mail that arrived tonight'

(Gadet 1989)

- (44) Eu estou a extrair de um domínio [que ele próprio não é regido]
I stay.1SG to extract from a domain that it really not is governed

‘I am about to exit a domain that is really not governed’

(Alexandre 2000)

But even in oblique positions, where the resumptive pronoun is largely preferred with *che/que*, it is not exceptional to find a gap, as in the examples in (45), where the prepositional information is lacking for good.

(45) a. Italian

Non c’è niente che ho bisogno

Not there=is nothing that have1.SG need

‘I do not need anything’

(from *Sono un ragazzo fortunato*, song by Jovanotti 1992)

b. French

C’est le livre que je t’ai parlé hier

It=is the book that I CL.DAT.2SG =have.1SG spoken yesterday

‘This the book I talked to you about’

Which factors favour resumption over gap strategies in the various relativisation sites (which might include simple distance and other parsing complexity features), and what is the exact status and frequency of non-standard *che/que*-strategies are issues that require further research.

4. The nature of the head

All the examples we have discussed so far contain a clearly identifiable nominal phrase modified by a separate RC following it. These are all cases of fully headed relatives. In other cases, the head is either absent, as in free relatives (§4.1), or very reduced, as in light headed relatives (§4.2). Other special cases are free choice *wh*-constructions (§4.3), correlatives, where the head is repeated twice, (§4.4) and pseudorelatives (§4.5).

4.1. Free relatives

Free relatives can be preliminarily defined as relative clauses that are introduced by a bare *wh*-element and do not show any (overt) head (see below for special cases for so-called free choice free relatives that do not fit this working definition). Prototypical examples of free relatives in English are given in (46) and (47) in square brackets.

(46) I noticed [what you did for me]

(47) I did not meet [who you recommended]

Typically, the same sequence of word that forms a free relative can form an embedded question:

(48) I wonder [what you did for me]

(49) I wonder [who you recommended]

Free relatives can also have an adverbial distribution, as in (50). In this case they are also referred to as ‘adverbial clauses’.

- (50) a. I arrived [when you left]
 b. I cooked the dish [how you suggested]
 c. I went [where you did]

Free relatives are present in all major Romance varieties, as exemplified below.

- (51) a. [Chi arriva in ritardo] non partecipa alla riunione
 ‘Who arrive 3.SG in=late not take=part3.SG to=the meeting’
 ‘Who will arrive late will not take part to the meeting’

Italian

- b. [Qui diu això] ment
 ‘Who say3.SG this lie3.SG’
 ‘Who says this lie’

Catalan (Hirschbühler & Rivero 1983: 487)

- c. [Quien bien te quiere] te hará llorar
 who well you.ACC love.3.SG you.ACC make3.SG.FUT cry
 ‘Who loves you well will make you cry’

Spanish (Rivero 1984: 83)

- d. Elena detestă [pe cine o critică].
 Elena hate3.SG ACC who her criticize3.SG
 ‘Elena hates the one/those who criticize(s) her.’

Romanian (Caponigro and Fălăus 2017)

- d. Quem estuda tem boas notas
 ‘Who study3.SG has good marks’
 ‘Who studies has good marks’

Portuguese (Mioto and Lobo 2016: 282)

- e. Je féliciterai [qui relèvera le défi]
 I congrat1.SG.FUT who take3.SG.FUT the challenge
 ‘I will congrat (the one) who will take the challenge up.’

French

Free relatives in Romance are distinguished from headed relatives not only by the absence of an overt head but also by the fact that, unlike headed relatives, they cannot contain the counterpart of the complementizer *che/que*. In fact, the sentences in (51) become unacceptable if the complementizer is introduced.

As for *wh*-words that can introduce free relatives in Romance varieties, there is some cross-linguistic variation. For example in standard Italian free relatives can be introduced by *chi* (‘who’), *dove* (‘where’), *quando* (‘when’), *come* (‘how’), *quanto* (‘how’) but not by *cosa* (‘what’).

- (52) a. Ho chiesto cosa hai letto
 have.1SG asked what have.2SG read
 ‘I asked what you read’

- b. *Ho comprato cosa hai letto
have.1SG bought what have.2SG read

Italian is not isolated in ruling out the counterpart of ‘what’ in free relatives. Also in French, Portuguese, Spanish and Catalan free relatives cannot be introduced by the equivalent of ‘what’.

- (53) *J’aime [que tu as cuisiné].
I like KE you have.2SG cooked

French

- (54) *He tastat [què has cuinat].
have.1SG tasted what have. 2SG cooked

Catalan (Caponigro 2003:163)

- (55) *Comí [qué cocinaste].
ate.1SG what cooked.2SG

Spanish (Caponigro 2003:168)

- (56) *Ele admira [que é belo].
He admire.3SG what is beautiful.MASC.SG
‘He admires what is beautiful.’

Catalan

In other Romance varieties, like Romanian, free relatives with the counterpart of ‘what’ are fully acceptable, though:

- (57) Ți-am dat [ce vrei]
CL.DAT.2SG=have.1SG given what wanted.2SG
‘I gave what you wanted’

Romanian

A significant part of the literature on free relatives has been devoted to the matching requirement, another property that sets free relatives and headed relatives apart. In the case of Romance the matching requirement can be stated as a condition that dictates that the preposition introducing the *wh*-phrase has to be compatible both with the matrix predicate and with the predicate in the free relative. Matching is illustrated in (58). As the verbs *concordar* ‘agree’ and *conversar* ‘talk’ both select for the preposition *com* ‘with’, the sentence obeys the matching condition.

- (58) Ele só conversa com quem ele concorda.
he only talk.3SG with who he agree.3SG
‘He always talks to whoever he agrees with.’

Brasilian Portuguese (Kato and Nunes 1998)

However, (59) and (60) are ruled out since the verb *rir* ‘laugh’ selects for the preposition *de*. Therefore, there is bound to be a mismatch: if the preposition *com* introduces the *wh*-word the selection requirement of the embedded verb *rir* are not satisfied (cf. 59). If the preposition *de* introduces the *wh*-word, it is the selection requirement of the matrix verb *concordar* that is not satisfied (cf. 60).

- (59) *Ele sempre concorda com ele ri.

- he always agree.3SG with he laughs
 (60) *Ele sempre concorda de quem ele ri.
 he always agree.3SG of who he laughs
 Brazilian Portuguese (Kato and Nunes 1998)

There are syntactic contexts in Romance in which the matching requirement has been argued *not* to hold. For example, Hirschbühler and Rivero (1983: 509) claim that in Catalan the requirement is suspended if the free relative is left-dislocated. Still, cases of mismatch seem very restricted and the sentences with mismatch often have a marginal status (cf. Grosu 1994 for discussion).

Semantically, free relatives come in two main varieties (cf. Šimík to appear for an overview of the literature of the semantics of free relatives). They can have the semantics of definite NPs, namely they denote the unique/maximal entity that satisfies the description that the free relative provides (this is the only possible way to interpret free relatives in English). For example, the following sentence can be paraphrased by saying that I reproached all people who arrived late.

- (61) Ho sgridato chi è arrivato tardi.
 have.1SG scolded who is arrived late
 ‘I scolded who arrived late’

Although the unique/maximal interpretation is the typical one, free relatives in many languages (including all the major Romance varieties) can also have an existential interpretation, for example when they appear in the complement position of existential *be* and existential *have* predicates (cf. Caponigro 2003, Grosu 2004 and Šimík 2011). This is illustrated by the following Italian examples. The existential nature of the free relatives is made explicit by their English translation.

- (62) Ho con chi chiacchierare mentre aspetto
 have.1SG with whom to-chat while wait.1SG
 ‘There is someone I can chat with while I am waiting’
 (63) C’è chi può aiutare
 There=is who can.3SG help
 ‘There is someone who can help’

As for their syntactic analysis, free relatives have been the object of an extensive debate that cannot be summarized in a limited space (cf. van Riemsdijk 2006). Suffice it to say that two families of analyses can be identified. According to a first approach, the free relative is only superficially headless since there is an empty head that acts as a covert head. This analysis minimizes the difference with headed relatives (cf. Grosu 2003 for an extensive defence of this view). According to a second group of analyses, the *wh*-element is directly selected by the matrix verb, so free relatives are literally headless. An example of this approach is Donati’s (2006) account, which claims that the *wh*-word moves as a head into a dedicated position in the left periphery and by doing so, it endows the clause with the D-feature required for its nominal interpretation. Donati’s analysis has been incorporated into Cecchetto and Donati’s (2015) general theory of labeling, according to which words (but not phrases) have the power to change the label of the category they attach to. This would explain why free relatives cannot be introduced only by *wh*-phrases (as opposed to *wh*-words), as illustrated in (64) with an Italian example:

- (64) *[Quale ragazzo arriva in ritardo] non partecipa alla riunione
 which boy arrive.3SG in late not participate.3SG to=the meeting
 a *wh*-word can turn a clause into a nominal constituent while a *wh*-phrase cannot.

The generalization that free relatives can be introduced only by *wh*-words seems to be very solid inside and outside Romance. However, Romanian is an exception:^{ix}

- (65) Am citit [ce carte / ce cărți ai citit și tu].
 have.1SG read what book / what books have.2SG read also you
 ‘I read what book(s) you read.’

Caponigro and Fălăuș (2017)

4.2. *Light headed relatives*

The impossibility of free relatives introduced by the counterpart of ‘what’ in the varieties in which this is not possible can be loosely related to the presence of an alternative construction which resembles (but is distinct from) free relatives. This is the structure that Citko (2004) called light-headed relatives, where the head has the shape of a demonstrative pronoun or of a definite determiner and the element *che/que* is present:

- (66) He visto a la [que me presentaste]
 have.1SG seen at the that CL.DAT.1SG introduced.2SG
 ‘I have seen the one that you have introduced to me’

Spanish (Citko 2004: 97)

- (67) Ho comprato ciò che mi hai suggerito
 Have.1SG bought that that CL.DAT.1SG have.2SG recommended
 ‘I bought what you suggested’

Italian

- (68) He tastat el [que has cuinat].
 have.1SG tasted the that have.2SG cooked
 ‘I tasted what you cooked.’

Catalan (Caponigro 2003:164)

- (69) Ele admira [o que é belo].
 he admire.3SG the that is beautiful
 ‘He admires what is beautiful.’

Portuguese (Matos and Brito 2008: 310)

Light-headed relatives and free relatives, although functionally very similar, cannot be assimilated because light-headed relatives lack two distinctive features of free relatives: they are not introduced by a *wh*-word and they do have a head, although this is reduced. Typically light-headed relatives, unlike free relatives, are not string ambiguous with embedded interrogatives. However, this is not true in general. For example, in French the sequence formed by the demonstrative *ce* and by the complementizer *que* can introduce an embedded question (70a) in addition to its use in a light-headed relative (70b):

- (70) a. Je voudrais savoir [ce que tu as acheté]
 I want.1SG.COND know this that you have.2SG bought
 ‘I would like to know what you bought’
 b. Je voudrais acheter [ce que tu as acheté]
 I want.1SG.COND buy this that you have.2SG bought
 ‘I would like to buy what you bought’

4.3. Free choice free relatives

Another construction that closely resembles (and that according to some authors should be assimilated to) ordinary free relatives is so-called free choice free relatives. As we mentioned at the end of §4.1, in the overwhelming majority of cases, free relatives cannot be introduced by a *wh*-phrase (as opposed to a *wh* word). However, if the *wh*-root attaches to the affix which corresponds to English *–ever*, the structure becomes grammatical. This construction is often called free-choice, due to its semantics. Free choice free relatives have been studied in Italian (cf. Donati & Cecchetto 2011 and Caponigro and Fălăuș 2017), Romanian (cf. Caponigro and Fălăuș 2017), and Spanish (Quer 1999) for Romance. The following examples illustrate Italian (with suffix *–unque*) and Romanian (with prefix *–ori*).

- (71) [Qualunque ragazzo arriverà in ritardo] non parteciperà alla riunione
 Whichever boy arrive.3SG.FUT in late not participate.3SG.FUT to=the meeting
 ‘Whatever boy will arrive late will not take part to the meeting’

- (72) Elena detestă [ori-ce coleg o critică].
 Elena hate.3SG *ori*-what colleague cl.ACC criticize.3SG
 ‘Elena hates any colleague that criticizes her.’

Romanian, Caponigro and Fălăuș (2017)

Free-choice free relatives are set apart from ordinary free relatives not only by their semantics but also by their syntactic properties, as originally discussed by Battye (1989) for Italian. For example, while *che/que* is totally unacceptable in ordinary free relatives, it is allowed (or even obligatory) in free-choice free relatives, at least in some varieties. We report here examples from Spanish and Italian. As noted by Quer (1999), the subjunctive (or an irrealis) mood is required to make these sentences fully acceptable.

- (73) Presenta'm [qualsevol que hagi fet una sollicitud]
 Introduce.IMP.SG=CL.ACC-1SG anyone that have-SUB.1SG made an application
 ‘Introduce to me anyone who has applied’

Catalan (Quer 1999: 76)

- (74) Informarán a quienquiera que lo solicite
 Inform.FUT.3PL a whoever that CL.ACC ask.SUB.PRS.1SG
 ‘They will inform whoever asks about it’

Spanish (Quer 1999: 76)

- (75) Correggi [qualunque parola che venga scritta male]
 Correct.IMP.SG whichever word that come.SUBJ.3SG written incorrectly

‘Correct any word that will be written incorrectly’

Italian (adapted from Battye 1989)

A second difference is that the *wh*-word that introduces a free-choices free relative can stay alone as an argument (cf. (76) which sharply contrasts with (77), containing a *wh* word without the *-unque* suffix).

(76) L’opposizione cerca il voto di chiunque
The opposition seek.3-SG the support of whoever
‘The opposition is seeking everyone’s support’

(77) *L’opposizione cerca il voto di chi
The opposition seek.3-SG the support of who

4.4. Correlative relatives

Correlative relativization strategies typically include a left-peripheral relative clause that is linked to a nominal correlate in the main clause (Lipták 2009). An illustrative example is given from Hindi — perhaps the most well-known and most cited example of a correlative, from Srivastav (1991: 3a) : (78).

(78) [jo laRkii khaRii hai] vo lambii hai
REL girl standing is that tall is
lit. Which girl is standing, that is tall.
‘The girl who is standing is tall.’

In Romance correlatives are attested only in Romanian (Brasoveanu 2012), where they strongly resemble extraposed free relatives. An example is given below (adapted from Bîlbîie 2016: 50).

(79) Care vine primul, acela va câștiga concursul
Who come3-sg first this go3-sg win competition.DEF
lit. who comes first, that wins the competition
‘The person who comes first wins the competition’

4.5 Pseudorelatives

Pseudorelatives are adnominal clauses that are string identical with the headed relative clauses introduced by *che/que* but are structurally distinguished from them and have a different semantics. An example of a pseudorelative is given in (80). As shown by its translation, the semantics of a pseudorelative is similar to that of Accusative-*ing* clauses in English, namely infinitival clauses following perception verbs, like ‘I saw him crossing the street’.

(80) Vi o Jorge que comia a maçã.

saw.1SG the Jorge that ate an apple
 ‘I saw Jorge eating an apple’

(European Portuguese)

(80) cannot be a restrictive headed relative, because restrictive relatives do not modify a proper name and is not an appositive relative either, because it does not have the intonation of appositives and because it has a distinct meaning (roughly speaking it means ‘I saw Jorge while he was eating an apple’).

Pseudorelatives are attested in all major Romance varieties but for Romanian, and seem to have similar properties, although a systematic comparison across Romance varieties has not been done yet. Some differences between restrictive relatives and pseudorelatives are listed below:

(i) Only pseudorelatives appear freely with proper names or pronouns:

(81) L’ho visto che correva (Italian)
 CL.ACC.3SG=have.1SG seen that ran
 ‘I saw him running’

(ii) Pseudorelatives are grammatical only if the antecedent corresponds to the subject of the pseudorelative, as shown by the contrast between (82) and (83). Object and oblique pseudorelatives are never acceptable:

(82) J’ai vu Pierre qui embrassait Marie (French)
 I=have.1SG seen Pierre that kissed.3SG Marie
 (83) *J’ai vu Pierre qui Marie embrassait
 I=have.1SG seen Pierre that Marie kissed.3SG
 (84) *J’ai vu Pierre à qui Marie parle.
 I=have.1SG seen Pierre to whom Marie speaks

(iii) While in ordinary relative clauses there are no restrictions relating the tense of the RC to that of the matrix clause, tense variation in pseudorelatives is more constrained. For example, a future tense in the pseudorelative is not grammatical if the matrix tense is present perfect.

(85) Ho visto il ragazzo che correrà. (Italian)
 Have.1SG seen the boy that run.FUT.3SG
 ‘I saw the boy that will run.’
 (86) *Ho visto Gianni che correrà.
 Have.1SG seen Gianni that run.FUT.3SG

(iv) Pseudorelatives are restricted to stage level (namely very transitory) properties. For example, (77) is ungrammatical because ‘being a student’ is an individual level (namely a more permanent) predicate.

(87) *Vi a Juan que era estudiante (Spanish)
 saw.1SG to Juan that was student

(v) Pseudorelatives are selected by a subset of predicates and therefore have a much more limited distribution than ordinary headed relatives. These predicates typically include verbs of perception (‘see’, ‘listen’, etc.); propositional attitudes verbs like ‘imagine’, ‘remember’;

verbs of creation like ‘describe’, ‘draw’ ‘to make a photo of’ etc.; verbs like ‘meet’, ‘find’, ‘leave’; the presentational copula; psych verbs like ‘hate’, ‘(dis)like’ etc.

As discussed by Casalicchio (2013), in some Romance varieties like Spanish, pseudorelatives alternate with gerundive clauses, as illustrated in (88). Although functionally similar, gerundive clauses do not have the make-up of relatives, most notably because the verb is not finite and the *che/que* category is absent.

- (88) Vi a Juan tocando la guitarra
saw.1SG to Juan playing the guitar
‘I saw Juan playing the guitar.’

(Spanish)

Pseudorelatives are also functionally similar to infinitive constructions, as the following examples from Raposo (1989: 304), show. However, their internal make-up and their distribution is different. For example, infinitival adnominal clauses are restricted to perceptual verbs while pseudorelatives occur with a bigger group of predicates, as mentioned above.

- (89) Vi o Jorge que comia a maçã.
saw.1SG the Jorge that ate-3SG the apple
(90) Vi o Jorge a comer a maçã.
saw.1SG the Jorge to eat the apple
I saw Jorge eating an apple

(European Portuguese)

The literature on pseudorelatives is fairly extensive and we cannot summarize the various analyses that have been proposed. For further discussion: Cinque (1995), Guasti (1988), Casalicchio (2013), Radford (1975). Grillo and Costa contain a discussion of pseudorelatives from a psycholinguistic perspective.

Further Readings

A list on further readings on relative clauses should probably start from the *State of the Art article* on relativization by Valentina Bianchi that appeared in *Glotta international* in 2002: somehow outdated, it is still the most informative and complete introduction to formal approaches to relative clauses, with important references to Romance. Another reference work for further understanding the debate over relative clauses is the volume edited by Artemis Alexiadou, Paul Law, André Meinunger and Chris Wilder on *The syntax of Relative Clauses*, and in particular the introduction by the editors. A third important starting point on relativization in general is Andrews (2007), which provides a basic typological overview that might help inserting Romance strategies into a wider picture.

Concerning the analysis to be given to relative clauses, Romance relatives have always been at the center of the debate. They are crucially related in particular to the development of the raising analysis, from its very first formulation (Vergnaud 1974; to its more recent revival by Kayne 1994): see in particular Bianchi (1999). See also Borsley (1997) for an important critique of the raising analysis and de Vries (2002). A development of the raising analysis largely based on Italian and Romance is Donati and Cecchetto (2011), further developed in Cecchetto and Donati (2015). Recent work by Cinque, importantly but not exclusively based on Romance within a typological perspective, is going towards a unification of the raising analysis and the matching analysis, and arguing for a universal prenominal origin of relative

clauses: see in particular Cinque (2013) and Cinque (in preparation).

On the nature of resumptive pronouns, we recommend the reading of Demirdache (1991) and of the comprehensive volume edited by Rouveret (Rouveret 2011). See also Suñer (1998) on resumptive strategies in Romance crosslinguistically and Contreras (1999) for relatives and related constructions in Spanish.

The debate on the nature of the invariant element *che/que* can be followed closely by reading in particular Kayne (1976) and Cinque (1978), Manzini and Savoia (2003) on various Romance varieties including Italian dialects, and Koopman and Sportiche (2014) on French.

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Notes

ⁱ When not otherwise specified, the examples in Italian and French discussed in the article are made up by the authors. The data from other Romance languages are either taken from the literature (and hence specified) or result from discussions with the following colleagues, whom we thank: Josep Quer (Catalan), Carmen Dobrovie Sorin (Romanian), Carla Soares-Jéssel (Portuguese).

ⁱⁱ In the literature there is no satisfactory explanation of the factors that determine when the article is obligatory and when it can be omitted. As a matter of fact, there is not even a generalization that captures all the relevant facts (although there have been several proposals). See Brucart (1992) for some interesting comments.

ⁱⁱⁱ However, in Spanish there are non-finite structures which closely resemble relatives with *que*:

(i) Tengo algo que comer.
Have1SG something que to=eat

^{iv} Various Romance varieties of the Italian area display complementizers showing phi-features agreement. See Poletto and Sanfelici (2019) and Manzini and Savoia (2003) for data and discussion.

^v On this so-called *que-qui* rule see Kayne (1976), and Sportiche (2011) and Koopman and Sportiche (2014) for a recent overview. As for the exact nature of this allomorphy, the most influential analyses argue that *qui* is an inflected (agreeing) form of *que* (Rizzi 1990) or a contracted form *que + i(l) = qui*: see Rooryck (2000), Taraldsen (2001), Rizzi and Shlonsky (2007).

^{vi} Let us mention at least the matching analysis, which combines into a raising analysis the intuitions of the deletion analysis: RCs, or at least some of them, would include two copies of the relative head, one external, and one internal, raised to the edge of the clause and then deleted under identity with the external copy: see Sauerland (1998) and Sauerland (2003) for details. We don't discuss further this analysis since it has not been particularly developed in relation to Romance. See Rinke & Assmann (2017) for an application to Portuguese.

^{vii} All the data presented here come from Bentea (2010). The glosses have been slightly modified to adapt them to the rest of the article.

^{viii} For an analysis of non-standard relative clauses in Italian varieties, see Berruto (1987), Cinque (1988) and the references cited therein. For French, see the first attestations in Damourette and Pichon (1911–1930), and more recent analyses in Gadet (1988) and Godard (1989), among others.

^{ix} Given Cecchetto and Donati's system, the exceptional pattern of Romanian can be related to another property that sets Romanian apart from other Romance languages, namely the fact that an overt demonstrative can precede the *wh*-word in free relatives (cf. i). Arguably, the demonstrative can provide the nominal label to the free relatives, even in absence of a *wh*-word. This makes these structures light-headed relatives where the demonstrative that heads the relative can be either pronounced (as in i) or null (as in 65 in the text).

(i) Imi place ceea ce ai cumparat
1SG.DAT like.3SG DEM what AUX.PRS.2SG bought

Lit. I like the what you bought

(Dobrovie and Sorin 2013: 638)