MORE ON THE INDEFINITE CHARACTER OF THE HEAD OF RESTRICTIVE RELATIVES

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Introduction

The literature on relative clauses makes occasional reference to the fact that the Head internal to a (restrictive) relative clause is indefinite. For example, Browning (1987, 129-131) observes (also see Bianchi 1999,43) that the trace within a restrictive relative clause is interpreted as indefinite, appearing in contexts that exhibit an indefiniteness restriction: The men that there were in the garden vs. *There were the men in the garden (cf. There were (some/many/three) men in the garden).

Similarly, Kayne (1994, chapter 9, 124), suggests that an indefinite determiner should not necessarily be taken to occupy the same position as the definite determiner that takes scope over the Head and the relative clause (and that marks the uniqueness or maximality of the intersection of the set of things denoted by the Head and the set of things denoted by the relative clause). Rather it could be taken to head “some “smaller” category, perhaps a QP” (Kayne 1994,p.167, fn.15; also see Kayne 2006,§7).

In what follows I will discuss three sets of facts that seem to provide further support for the conclusion that the Head internal to a (restrictive) relative clause is indeed inherently indefinite.

A. The first comes from the existence of languages that bear the indefinite character of the Head of restrictive relative clauses on their sleeves, so to speak. Kusaiean (Austronesian) has headed postnominal relative clauses, which (as in most other Austronesian languages) precede demonstratives: N… RC Dem. An interesting feature of Kusaiean is the regular co-occurrence of a lower indefinite

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1 For the idea that the determiner takes scope over the Head and the relative clause see Stockwell, Schachter and Partee (1973), which also contains one of the earliest proposals that the Head internal to the relative clause should be taken to be (specific-)indefinite.
article with the demonstrative. The indefinite article follows the Head and precedes the relative clause and the demonstrative. See:

(1) [mwet se [elthal uniyah] ah] pa Sohn (Kusaiean - Sohn 1973,114f) [person a [they killed] Dem] TOP John
   ‘The person whom they killed was John’

   This may be taken to suggest that the Head of the relative clause is an “indefinite DP” embedded in the larger (definite) DP.2

B. The second piece of evidence for the indefinite character of the Head of restrictive relatives comes from a number of constructions in Italian (and other languages) which contain a DP that can only be indefinite except when it heads a restrictive relative clause; in which case it is allowed to be definite. See for example (2) to (6):3

(2) a. Ho una/*la/*0 fame terribile4
   I.have a/the/0 hunger terrible
   ‘I am terribly hungry’
   b. La fame terribile che ho..
   The hunger terrible that I have..

(3) a. Ha un/*il/*0 bel viso
   She.has a/the/0 beautiful face

2 The word order in (1) arguably derives from a Merge order [Dem [RC [indef.det. [NP]]]], via successive roll-up movements (cf. Cinque 2005, in preparation).

Mooré (Gur) also allows the co-occurrence of an indefinite determiner (closer to the N) with the definite determiner. See (i), from Tellier (1989, 308):

(i) m karma [sebr ninga wa] saame
    1sg read [book a (certain) the] yesterday
    ‘I read the certain book (that we already talked about) yesterday’

   All of this should not be taken to mean that indefinite determiners are necessarily lower than definite ones. Lakhota, to be discussed below, offers evidence for the presence of a lower indefinite determiner and a higher one, which possibly occupies the same position as definite determiners (see (14)a). For comparative evidence that one should assume more than one position for (definite) determiners within DP, see Kayne (2004).

3 These cases are reminiscent of the contrast between (i)a and b, due to Noam Chomsky, mentioned in Browning (1987,129):

   (i) a. *John had the question for the teacher
   b. The question that John had for the teacher

4 On the determinerless nature of the non modified counterpart of (2)a (Ho fame, J’ai fain ‘I am hungry (lit. I have hunger)’), see Kayne (2005,41f), and Sâvescu (2008a,b). As apparent from (2)a, when modified, fame ‘hunger’ obligatorily takes an indefinite determiner.
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b. Il bel viso che ha..
The beautiful face that she has..

(4) a. Hanno preso una/*la/*0 posizione diversa
   They have taken a/the/0 position different
   ‘They have taken a different position’
b. La posizione diversa che hanno preso..
   the position different that they have taken..
   ‘The different position that they have taken’

(5) a. Ha preso un/*il/*0 granchio (in the idiomatic reading ‘(S)he made a mistake’)
   (S)he has caught a/the/0 crab
b. Il granchio che ha preso..
   the crab that (S)he has caught..
   ‘The mistake that (s)he made’

(6) a. Pensava di essere un/*il/*0 genio incompreso
   He thought he was a/the/0 genius undiscovered
   ‘He thought he was an undiscovered genius’
b. Non era il genio incompreso che pensava di essere
   not he was the genius undiscovered that he thought to be
   ‘He wasn’t the undiscovered genius that he thought he was’

   It is tempting to take all of the b. cases of (2) to (6) as evidence for the presence in front of the Head of a (lower) unpronounced indefinite determiner in Italian, as shown in (7):^3

(7) a. la [UNA fame terribile] che ho..
   the a hunger terrible that I have..
b. Il [UN bel viso] che ha..
   the a beautiful face that she has..
c. La [UNA posizione diversa] che hanno preso..
   the a position different that they took..
d. Il [UN granchio] che ho preso..
   the a crab that I have caught.. (the mistake that I made..)
e. Il [UN genio incompreso] che pensava di essere..
   the a genius undiscovered that he thought to be..
   ‘The undiscovered genius that he thought he was’

^3 We abstract away here from the question whether the Head is internal to the relative clause and raises in front of the relative clause, or is external, matched by an identical (indefinite) internal Head within the relative clause. See below for discussion.
If we assume that, nothing special needs to be said concerning the exceptional
determiner that occurs with the NPs in (2)b-(6)b.

Other interesting evidence for the presence of a null indefinite determiner within
the Head of a restrictive relative comes from two special interpretative properties of
indefinite DPs, not shared by their definite counterparts.

The first involves a specific interpretation of adjectives like *sconosciuto*
‘unknown’ observed in Abusch and Rooth (1997). They note that if the DP in which
such adjectives occur is indefinite the adjectives, in addition to their meaning
roughly paraphrasable as ‘little known, insignificant’, can also be interpreted in an
‘epistemic’ sense roughly paraphrasable as “that it is not known where it is”. See for
example the ambiguity of (8)a, which contrasts with the non ambiguity of (8)b (if
the latter sentence is at all good):6

(8) a. Vive in un villaggio sconosciuto del Sud della Francia
    1. ‘he lives in a village of the South of France and it is not known which one it is’
    2. ‘he lives in some insignificant/little known village of the South of France’
b. Vive nel villaggio sconosciuto del sud della Francia
    1. *‘he lives in the village of the South of France and it is not known where it is’
    2. ‘he lives in the insignificant/little known village of the South of France’

Now, consider the example (9), where the adjective *sconosciuto* appears in a
definite DP containing a relative clause:

(9) Nel villaggio sconosciuto del sud della Francia in cui vive..
    ‘In the unknown village of the South of France in which he lives.’

Here, differently from (8)b, the ‘epistemic’ interpretation is again available,
which makes it plausible to assume the hidden presence of an indefinite determiner
within the Head, as shown in (10):

(10) Nel [UN villaggio sconosciuto del sud della Francia] in cui vive..
    ‘In the [a village unknown of the South of France] in which he lives.’

A second property typical of indefinite DPs in Italian (and, more generally,
Romance) is the fact that a postnominal adjective is compatible with both a specific
and a non-specific interpretation of the DP (while a prenominal one forces the
specific reading). This was originally observed by Bosque (1993, 1996, 2001) for
Spanish and is discussed by Picallo (1994), and Cinque (forthcoming) for Catalan

6 Better *Vive in quel villaggio sconosciuto nel sud della Francia* ‘He lives in that unknown
village of the South of France’, which only has the non-epistemic sense. On the fact that the
epistemic sense is lost in Italian if the adjective appears prenominally see the discussion in
Cinque (forthcoming, chapter 2).
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and Italian, respectively. Definite DPs cannot have the non-specific interpretation. Consider, for example, (11)

(11) a. So che un attore famoso interverrà alla festa
   I know that an actor famous will come to the party
   ‘I know that a famous actor will come to the party’
   b. So che l’attore famoso interverrà alla festa
   I know that the actor famous will come to the party
   ‘I know that the famous actor will come to the party’

While (11)a is ambiguous between a reading in which the speaker has in mind a specific famous actor (the specific reading) and one in which he does not know the identity of the famous actor who will come to the party (the non-specific reading), (11)b cannot have the non-specific reading.

Again, it is interesting to observe that the non-specific reading (in addition to the specific one) becomes available in a definite DP if this contains a restrictive relative clause. See (12):

(12) L’attore famoso che interverrà alla festa sicuramente avrà lo smoking
   The actor famous that will come to the party will surely wear a tuxedo
   ‘The famous actor that will come to the party will surely wear a tuxedo’

This interpretive effect can once more be understood if we take the Head of the relative clause to be indefinite:

(13) L’ [UN attore famoso] che interverrà alla festa sicuramente avrà lo smoking
   The [an actor famous] that will come to the party will surely wear a tuxedo
   ‘The famous actor that will come to the party will surely wear a tuxedo’


As Williamson shows, the Head of Lakhota (restrictive) relative clauses is internal to the relative clause and displays an indefiniteness restriction. Like the English existential there-construction, it can only contain ‘weak determiners’ (in the sense of Milsark 1974), i.e. indefinite articles like ‘a’, weak quantifiers like ‘some’, ‘many’, and ‘few’, and cardinal numerals. The presence of any ‘strong determiners’

7 If a silent indefinite determiner is present in definite DPs containing a restrictive relative, recourse to a special accommodation mechanism (as in Heim 1982) to account for the fact that such definite DPs can be bound by a quantifier binding a pronominal inside them (Every man saw the dog that barked at him), while definite DPs ordinarily cannot (p. 245ff), may prove unnecessary. Interestingly, Heim explicitly says (p. 247) that the above sentence receives the same truth conditions as Every man saw a dog that barked at him.
(like definite articles, demonstratives, quantifiers such as ‘all’, ‘every’, ‘most’, etc.) renders the sentence ungrammatical (see p.175f). See for example the contrast between (14)a and b:

(14)  a. [Mary [owįža wą] kağe] ki/cha/k'ų he ophewatų (Williamson 1987, 171)  
M. quilt a make the/a the aforementioned Dem 1-buy  
'I bought the/a quilt that Mary made’

b. *[Mary [owįža ki] kağe] ki he ophewatų (Williamson 1987, 171)  
M. quilt the make the Dem 1-buy

I would like to suggest that this indefinite restriction on the internal Head of internally headed relative clauses in Lakhota is to be expected under the unified analysis of relative clauses that I proposed in (2003/8) (see Cinque in preparation for more detailed discussion), and constitutes further evidence for the indefinite character of the Head of (restrictive) relative clauses in general.8

The core of Cinque’s (2003/8) proposal is that a single structure underlies all types of relative clauses (externally headed postnominal, externally headed prenominal, internally headed, headless, and correlative), in both the raising and the matching derivations; a structure in which the relative clause is merged prenominally, with every difference among the distinct relative clause types due to different derivational options.9 The prenominal merger of relative clauses is arguably a consequence of a more general property of UG. In Cinque (2002, 2005, 2008a), on the basis of a general left-right asymmetry of natural languages, I suggested that all elements found to the right of a lexical head (N(P),V(P), etc.) are not merged there, but come to be there as a consequence of the lexical head raising above them, merged in a lefthand specifier position. If so, also relative clauses, a sort of “syntactic adjectives” in Benveniste’s (1966, 222) terms, are like adjectives merged prenominally in one of the NP’s functional projections. In Cinque (2003/8, in preparation), it is suggested on the basis of cross-linguistic evidence that the Merge position of (finite) restrictive relative clauses is above the Numeral, the Adjectives, and the NP (in fact above all of Milsark’s ‘weak determiners’, (one type of) indefinite articles included), and below Universal Quantifiers, Demonstratives and definite articles (more generally, all of Milsark’s ‘strong determiners’), roughly

8 Also Peterson (1974) took the obligatorily indefinite Head of the internally headed relative clauses of Mooré (Gur) to be evidence for the indefinite character of the Head of restrictive relatives, in an analysis that has some points of contact with the one I propose below.

9 The prenominal Merge of relative clauses renders a “matching” derivation possible in Kayne’s (1994) Antisymmetry theory. This may be a welcome result if both “raising” and “matching” derivations turn out to be necessary, as argued in Áfarlı (1994), Sauerland (1998, 1999, 2003), Aoun and Li (2003), Szczegielniak (2005), Salzmann (2006), and Cinque (in preparation), among others.
as in (15), which I take to be a fragment of the universal structure of nominal phrases:

\[ \text{DemP D^o [RC X^o [NumP Y^o [AP... Z^o [NP]]]]} \]

As more clearly apparent from (16), which is to be thought of as built bottom up (with Merge and Move interspersed), this unified structure has both an external Head, and a Head internal to the relative clause, which are exact matches of each other. Given that the external Head (the chunk of the extended projection of NP modified by the relative clause) is, as noted, ‘indefinite’, the Head internal to the relative clause must also be ‘indefinite’. This will be at the basis, as I suggest below, of the indefinite restriction holding of Lakhota’s internally headed relative clauses.  

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10 I will ignore nonrestrictive relative clauses here. For discussion see Cinque (2008b), and fn25there for evidence that they are merged above demonstratives (and universal quantifiers).

11 For simplicity, I am taking \textit{that} to be a complementizer inserted under a C head, but see Kayne (forthcoming) (and Sportiche 2008, Koopman and Sportiche forthcoming on \textit{que/qui} in French) for arguments that they are (weak) relative pronouns/phrases, which would require merger into the specifier position of an additional C head.
The “raising” and “matching” derivations can be seen as two different derivational options open to this structure; in the “raising” one, it is the Head internal to the relative clause that ends up being the overt Head; in the “matching” one, it is the external Head that ends up being the overt Head.

In other words, if only the Head internal to the relative clause raises (say to Spec, C₂) causing the c-commanded external Head not to be pronounced, we have the “raising” derivation, in which reconstruction and island effects are detectable as the overt Head is in a chain with the relative clause internal position (see (17)): 
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If on the other hand the external Head raises (say, to Spec, C₁) above the position to where the Head internal to the relative clause has raised (Spec, C₂), causing the latter not to be pronounced, we have the “matching” derivation, in which reconstruction effects are not detectable as the surviving, overt, Head is not in a chain with the relative clause internal position (see (18)).

Island effects are still detectable if, as we have assumed in the text, the Head internal to the relative clause raises, but here much variation exists. See below, and especially Cinque (in preparation) for illustration. Bulgarian offers interesting evidence that (if it moves) the Head internal to the relative clause indeed raises to a position lower than that to which the external Head raises. When the “raising” derivation is not forced, the overt Head (which is the external Head) can be separated from the complementizer/relative pronoun by topic or focus phrases, suggesting that it raises to a high position within the CP field. However, when the “raising” derivation is forced, the overt Head (which is the internal one) cannot be similarly separated from the complementizer/relative pronoun, suggesting that it raises to a position lower than that occupied by topic and focus phrases. See Krapova (2008) for discussion.

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Under a copy theory of movement (Chomsky 1995, 202ff), and deletion as non pronunciation in PF of full structures in the computation, a number of problems arise. For one, in sentences like (19) we would expect a principle C violation when the Head internal to the relative clause is “reconstructed” in its position of Merge, contrary to fact.

(19) [The pictures of Marsden, [which pictures of Marsden, he, displays which pictures of Marsden, prominently] pictures of Marsden, ] are generally the attractive ones (cf. Safir 1998)

For another, in the idiom chunk case of “raising” derivations (cf. (20)), we would expect ungrammaticality (or at least marginality) due to the second, external, occurrence of the idiom chunk not being able to pair with the rest of the idiom:

(20) [The headway, that [he made headway,] headway] was satisfactory

For the first problem, we refer to Sauerland’s (1999, 2003) solution in terms of the notion of “vehicle change”. For the second (and for other problems), we refer to Cinque (in preparation). There the idiom case is tentatively treated in terms of a
silent Head: AMOUNT, TYPE, etc. (in the case at hand: *[The AMOUNT of headway that [he made AMOUNT of headway] AMOUNT] was satisfactory).

After sketching how the externally headed postnominal type of restrictive relatives is derived from (16) in both the “raising” and the “matching” derivations, let us briefly review how the other types of restrictive relatives can be derived, under the two derivations, from the same, unique, structure.

**Externally Headed Prenominal RCs:**

**Raising (cf. (21)):**

\[ dP_2 \text{ is attracted to } \text{Spec}, C_2, \text{ from where it controls the deletion of } dP_1; \text{ after which the remnant raises to } \text{Spec}, C_1. \]  

Reconstruction effects are expected as the overt Head is the ‘internal’ one (linked to the trace). And so is sensitivity to islands, due to the movement of the ‘internal’ Head.

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13 I abstract here from the further possibility of \( dP_1 \) raising above \( dP_2 \) and controlling its deletion before the raising of the IP remnant. Within Chinese, and in other languages with prenominal relatives, some variation exists also with respect to the position of \( C(P)_1 \) and \( C(P)_2 \), which either are or can be merged above the position of definite articles, demonstratives, and universal quantifiers. For more detailed discussion of both cases, see Cinque (in preparation). Also the problem raised by the violation of proper binding caused by movement of the remnant needs to be addressed.
This case seems to be instantiated by Chinese, which displays both relativization of idiom chunks (hence reconstruction) and island sensitivity (Aoun and Li 2003, 177), and Modern Tamil, where, according to Annamalai and Steever (1998, 123) and Vasu (1994, section 2.2), prenominal relative clauses are sensitive to islands.\footnote{Matching (cf. (22)):}

\[ \text{dP}_1 \text{directly controls the deletion of dP}_2 \text{backward. No reconstruction effects are expected, as the \textit{overt} Head is the ‘external’ one (the ‘internal’ Head not having moved). Nor is sensitivity to islands, as no movement of the internal Head is involved.} \]

This case may be instantiated by (among other languages) Tsez (Northeast Caucasian), which apparently shows no island sensitivity (Comrie and Polinsky 1999).

\textbf{Internally headed RCs} (which often alternate with prenominal RCs – Cole 1987):

\[ \text{Internally headed RCs} \]

\footnote{Also see the Inverse Case Attraction option of the Malayalam relative clause in (i), which Abraham (1978,64) takes as evidence for the movement of the Head (cf. the analysis of Inverse Case Attraction in terms of “raising” in Cinque 2007, 99-101):}

\[ \text{(i) [saar innalesakaariccillee oru vidyaarthe-ye] avan innu vanilla} \]

\[ \text{teacher yesterday scold.PST.TAG one student-ACC he today come.PST.NEG} \]

\[ \text{‘The student whom the teacher scolded yesterday did not come today’} \]
If internally headed relative clauses always displayed the indefiniteness restriction of Lakhota, as Williamson (1987) originally conjectured (p. 169) (also see Culy 1990), and necessarily showed the other properties characterizing Lakhota (possibility of stacking and absence of island sensitivity – Williamson 1987, 173 and 177), internally headed relative clauses could be taken to involve just a “matching” derivation; one which in fact is the converse of the “matching” derivation of externally headed prenominal relatives. In this case, it is the internal Head that controls the deletion of the external Head forward (rather than viceversa). Compare (23) with (22).  

I take this to be correct, even if for just one type of internally headed relative clauses. Those of Lakhota, as well as those of Diegueño (Yuman – Gorbet 1976),

Note that in the “matching” derivation of internally headed relative clauses ((23)), as well as in the “matching” derivation of externally headed prenominal relatives ((22)), neither Head c-commands the other from its in situ position, so that deletion of one by the other is not forced. As with VP deletion, which can take place either backward or forward in the same language, one should expect deletion here to freely apply either backward or forward, with the consequence that the language may give the impression of having two separate strategies of relative clause formation (external prenominal and internal) (cf. Cole’s observation that often externally headed prenominal relatives alternate with internally headed relatives within the same language). However, things are more complex (see Cinque in preparation for discussion).
and Mojave (Hokan – Munro 1976), which show the same cluster of properties (indefiniteness restriction, the possibility of stacking and the absence of island sensitivity). 16

In the recent literature (Basilico 1996, Grosu 2000, Grosu and Landman 1998), another type of internally headed relative clauses is recognized, which displays no indefinite restriction, and also the impossibility of stacking and the presence of island sensitivity (the opposite properties of the first type).

This type is apparently found in Japanese, Korean, Quechua, Navajo, and Haida, among other languages.

Given especially its property of island sensitivity, it is tempting to see this second type as involving movement (different from the first type); more specifically to involve the “raising” derivation in (24), where the internal Head, dP₂, is attracted to Spec,C₂, from where it controls the deletion of dP₁, the external Head. After that a phrase of the Remnant must be taken to raise to Spec,C₁, higher than the strong determiners. 17 In this case, reconstruction effects are expected, as the overt Head is the ‘internal’ one, linked to the trace, as is sensitivity to islands, due to the movement of the internal Head.

16 The head internal relative clauses of the Gur languages Mooré (Peterson 1974, Tellier 1989) and Buli (Hiraiwa 2005, section 5.3.2) also show the indefiniteness restriction. However, the fact that the internally headed relatives of Buli show sensitivity to islands, and those of Mooré license parasitic gaps (Tellier 1989) suggests that the internal Head does move, though not as high as to cross over the strong determiners (which is what the “left-headed” variant of the same construction in (i) in Buli apparently does):

\[ \text{[nà-nà-tù àtì nùrú-wá swà́ là́]} \text{ (Hiraiwa 2005,198)} \]

cow-the COMP man-the own Dem

“the cow that the man owns”

17 In the “left-headed” internally headed relative clauses of the Gur languages discussed by Hiraiwa (2005) there is no additional raising of a phrase of the Remnant.
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If dP₁ also raises above dP₂ and controls its deletion before a phrase of the remnant in turn raises above the strong determiners, the expected properties will be partly different. See Cinque (in preparation). Once the different types of internally headed relative clauses are teased apart, the indefiniteness restriction of the first type, where nothing moves, can be taken to provide independent evidence for the indefinite nature of the Head of restrictive relative clauses, as the internal Head and the external one, the traditional Head of relative clauses, are an exact match of each other under the analysis sketched above.¹⁸

¹⁸ Lakhota lacks (internally headed) nonrestrictive relative clauses (see (i)), from Williamson 1987, 175):

(i) *[[(Miye) makuže] ki/cha] wichawota ki ekta mnį kte
    Iemph I-sick the/a feast the to I-go FUT
    ‘I, who am sick, will go to the feast’

Given the merger of nonrestrictives above demonstratives (and universal quantifiers) (see fn. 8 above), one could however expect there to be languages with internally headed nonrestrictive relatives. One such language appears to be Haida. See (ii), from Enrico (2003, 570):

(ii) [tuut-ee-raa qung-ee 7ij-aa-n]-raaga  ‘la 7waa-gaa-n
    [box-DF-in moon-DF be-EVID-PST-]for 3PERS do-EVID-PST
    ‘He did it for the moon, which was in the box’
We will be even more sketchy on the remaining two types, referring to Cinque (in preparation) for more detailed discussion.19

For headless, or free, relative clauses, which arguably involve movement of just the internal Head, we take there to be a silent external Head (of a restricted class: THING, AMOUNT, PLACE, TIME, PERSON, MANNER) as shown in (25):

(25)  a. (I don’t like) \[ [what THING you said] (SUCH) THING]\n    b. (He weighs) \[ [what AMOUNT you weigh] (SUCH) AMOUNT]\n    c. (Here is) \[ [where PLACE they slept] THERE PLACE]\n    d. (I was there) \[ [when TIME he said that] THEN TIME]\n    e. (She hates \[ [whoever PERSON does that] (SUCH) PERSON]\n
In certain languages the “dummy” external Head (thing, place, time, person, etc.) is necessarily overt (‘thing (that) you said’ = ‘what you said’; ..). See Rapanui (Austronesian) – Du Feu 1996,47; Obolo (Niger-Congo) – Faraclas 1984,45; Abun (Papuan) – Berry and Berry 1999,146ff.

In Lakhota, it is instead in situ, within the relative clause, and optional. See (26):

(26)  [Mary (taku) kağe] ki ophewatų
       M. (something) make the I-buy
       ‘I bought what Mary made’

As to (Relative-)Correlative clauses, they are, strictly speaking, not a separate type, as they involve one or the other of the core types of relative clauses as one component. Abstracting away from the multiple headed adjunct correlative construction, simple correlatives can be analysed as the ‘left dislocation’ of a full DP containing (depending on the language) either an externally headed postnominal relative20, or an externally headed prenominal one21, or an internally headed one22, or a free relative (as in many Hindi correlatives), resumed in the matrix clause by a DP preceded by a demonstrative or by a demonstrative or pronominal alone. See Cinque (in preparation) for more detailed discussion.

19 The possible further type of ‘adjoined relatives’ (Hale 1976) can be analyzed as a case of (obligatory?) relative clause ‘extraposition’. See Keenan and Comrie (1977,80f) and Cinque (in preparation).
20 As in (some of the correlatives of) Marathi. See Cinque (in preparation) for discussion.
21 As in the Malayalam case discussed in fn.14 above, which also shows that it may be too strong to claim, as Downing (1978,400) did, that “[i]f a language has correlative relative constructions, it does not have prenominal ad-relative clauses.”
22 As in Wappo (a language isolate of California). See Li and Thompson (1978) and Thompson, Park and Li (2006, 6.2).
For the facts reviewed here to be construed as evidence for the indefinite character of the Head of restrictive relative clauses, some questions and some apparent counterexamples should also be addressed.23

A potential difficulty could come from the so-called definite conjugation of Hungarian, which marks (in main clauses) the definite character of the object. However, it seems that the trace of the relativized internal Head is indeed marked as indefinite, despite the apparent definite character of the external Head (and of the relative pronoun), thus confirming the evidence given above. See (27), from MacWhinney and Pléh (1988,100):25

(27)  A kutya kergeti a macskat, amelyet nez az eger.
   The dog(NOM) chase-3S-DEF the cat-ACC, which-ACC watch(3SINDEF)
   the mouse(NOM).
   ‘The dog chases the cat whom the mouse watches’

But things may be more complex and need to be looked into more carefully. For example, Bianchi (1999,82f) claims that the relative determiner ami (from the interrogative mi ‘who’) triggers the indefinite conjugation, while the relative determiner amely (from mely ‘which’) triggers the definite one (though this appears contradicted by (27) above). Should the which-type relative pronouns indeed turn out to sometime trigger the definite conjugation, it could be that they exploit the higher nonrestrictive Merge position, like the formal il quale restrictives of Italian in Cinque’s (1982, 2008b) analysis, which also show a definite relative pronoun.

Another possible difficulty for the indefinite character of the Head of restrictive relative clauses is the existence of restrictive relative clauses with definite resumptive pronouns, like the Palestinian Arabic case in (28), from Shlonsky (1992, 445), or the Bulgarian example (29)26:

(28)  l-bint ?illi šufti-(ha)
   the-girl that (you.fem.) saw-her
   ‘the girl that you saw’

I thank Gaby Hermon for raising these questions and for helpful discussion.

As MacWhinney and Pléh (1988,100) put it, “if the head noun plays the role of the object in the relative clause the verb is obligatorily indefinite even though the head of a relative is usually thought of as semantically definite (Kuno, 1986) and this definiteness is even marked morphologically on the relative pronoun. If the head noun is the subject of the relative clause the conjugation varies according to the definiteness of the object in the relative clause”.

Resumptive pronouns are also obligatorily required in Lebanese Arabic (Aoun and Li 2003, sect. 4.3).

Examples (29) and (30)b were suggested by Iliyana Krapova.

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26 Examples (29) and (30)b were suggested by Iliyana Krapova.
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(29) Poznavam edin colleg ot našta katedra deto to ku-što (go) uvolnixa
I know a colleague from our institute that just (him) they fired
‘I know a colleague from our institute that they just fired’

One possibility to reconcile these facts with the evidence reviewed above for the indefinite character of the Head of restrictive relatives would be to say that ‘definite’ pronouns can also stand for the smaller (indefinite) dP constituent postulated above.

Although more work is needed for an understanding of the phenomenon, a suggestive piece of evidence for this idea seems to come from Clitic Left Dislocation. If the left dislocated nominal and the ‘resumptive’ clitic start out as a ‘big DP’ constituent, which is subsequently split apart (as proposed by Kayne (1972, sect. 3) for Complex Inversion in French and Uriagereka (1995, 81) for Spanish. A movement derivation of Clitic Left Dislocation (cf. Cinque 1977) is compatible with the observations presented in Cinque (1990, chapter 2) if successive cyclic movement is for independent reasons unavailable.

References

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More on the indefinite character of the head of restrictive relatives


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Kayne, Richard S. Forthcoming. Why Isn’t This a Complementizer. In P. Svenonius et al. (eds.) Functional Structure from Top to Toe. (available online at: http://ling.auf.net/lingBuzz/000726).


