

A Note on Relative Clauses with Split Antecedents*
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Since Perlmutter and Ross (1970), relatives with split antecedents have represented an analytical problem for any theory of relative clauses. Two cases should in fact be distinguished; one in which the split antecedents occur in two (or more) coordinated sentences, characteristically bearing the same grammatical function (subject, object, etc.) (see section 1) and one in which they bear different grammatical functions in one and the same sentence (see section 2).

1. Split antecedents in coordinate sentences¹

The examples in (1) illustrate the case of split antecedents in two coordinated sentences:²

(1)a. A man_i entered the room and a woman_j went out who_{i,j} were quite similar. (Perlmutter and Ross 1970:350)

b. Every villager envies a relative of his and every townsman admires a friend of his who hate each other (Hintikka 1974:172)

c. The girl left and the boy arrived who met in Chicago (Chomsky 1975:fn.47)³

d. It is obvious that a man came in and a woman went out who were similar (Andrews 1975:119)

e. John saw a man and Mary saw a woman [who were wanted by the police] (Alexiadou, Law, Meinunger and Wilder 2000,14)

f. Kim likes muffins, but Sandy prefers scones, which they eat with jam (Arnold 2007: 274)

g. John noticed a man and Mary spotted a woman [who the police were looking for –] (Radford 2017,§5.2)

Our tentative interpretation of such cases is that they are possibly to be assimilated to those RCs that (marginally) receive a restrictive interpretation even though they enter a discourse grammar nonrestrictive structure like the restrictives with heavy pied piping in English (as in examples like *every candidate the father of whom Bill voted for* – Jacobson 1998:81) or the restrictives employing the art. + *qual-* paradigm in Italian (*I soci i quali non abbiano ancora versato la quota annuale.. 'The members who have not paid the annual fees..'* - Cinque 1982:264); constructions not derived by raising, in which the *wh*-pronoun is interpreted similarly to a pronoun or demonstrative.⁴ For

*To Liliane with sympathy and admiration.

¹ This construction must be kept distinct from the construction with coordinated antecedents which has come to be known as the hydra construction (Link 1984). The reason is that languages with pre-nominal relatives have the latter but not the former.

² Note that (1)b., e., f. and g. have split antecedents in the object rather than in the subject position of the coordinate sentences (pace Rochemont and Culicover 1990:38f). More difficult seem cases where the split antecedents in the coordinated sentences have different grammatical functions. Baltin (2005,255) gives an example like (i) as ungrammatical:

(i) *A man entered the room and I saw a woman who were similar

Also see Moltmann (1992). Yet, as noted in Smits (1988), for some Italians the split antecedents of a nonrestrictive relative need not have the same grammatical function. In fact I tend to accept a sentence like (ii)

(ii) Alla fermata è arrivato un uomo ed io ho visto anche un ragazzo, i quali si assomigliavano molto

At the bus stop a man arrived and I saw a boy too, who looked very much alike

Chaves (2012,§3.4.3) notes that conjunction, but not disjunction, gives acceptable sentences:

(ii) *A man entered or a woman left who were quite similar.

³ Chomsky (1975,98) actually says “To me these examples seem at best quite marginal, and I would question whether anything can be based on them.”(fn.47). In fact not all languages appear to allow for them. See Cardoso (2010,191f) on European Portuguese.

⁴ Recalling the analysis of split antecedents of nonrestrictive relatives in Demirdache (1991, p.116). Also see Erlewine and Kotek (2015) and Webelhuth, Sailer and Walker (2013,47), where such cases as (1)a. are suggested to be similar to *A man_i entered the room and a woman_k went out. They_{i+k} were quite similar.*

additional discussion of the discourse grammar non-restrictive construction, also arguably used for the special restrictive construction examined here, see Cinque (2008 and forthcoming). This interpretation may be supported by the following three facts. First, replacement in English of a *wh*-relative pronoun with *that* (which is otherwise unexceptionable with embedded and extraposed restrictives and marginal to impossible with nonrestrictives) leads for at least some speakers to much less acceptable sentences. Megan Rae (p.c.) finds (1)a with *that* replacing *who* much worse (see (2)a., with her judgment), and Arnold (2004,30) marks the variant with *that* in (2)b. as unacceptable:

- (2)a. ?*A man_i entered the room and a woman_j went out that_{i,j} were quite similar.
 b. Kim likes muffins_i, but Sandy prefers scones_j, which_{i+j}/*that_{i+j} they eat with jam.

Second, an example like (3) in Italian is to my ear marginally possible even though it apparently violates the Right Roof Constraint:

(3) ?[Che [qualcuno_i ci abbia aiutato] e [un'altro_j si sia aggiunto] è una fortuna] senza i quali_{i,j} tutto questo non sarebbe stato possibile.

That someone_i helped us and someone else_j joined in was a stroke of luck without whom_{i+j} this would not have been possible.

Third, as noted in Del Gobbo (2010,406f, 2015,§2.2; 2017,§2.2) and Lin and Tsai (2015,105f) split-antecedent RCs parallel to (1) above appear not to be possible in Chinese, even in nonrestrictive RCs, which are of the integrated type. This may well be a general property of languages with pre-nominal RCs, which, as seen, do not dispose of non-integrated nonrestrictives (Jaklin Kornfilt, p.c., informs me that examples like (1) above are indeed impossible also in Turkish pre-nominal RCs, although examples of coordinated antecedents (hydras) are perfectly grammatical).

For further discussion and different analyses of these split antecedent cases in terms of movement see De Vries (2002,66ff and Chapter 7,§5.2.12), Zhang (2007,2010), Cecchetto and Donati (2015,§3.3.5), Overfelt (2015,§6.2)⁵ and Fox and Johnson (2016). Despite these attempts, it does not seem unreasonable to conclude, with Alexiadou, Law, Meinunger and Wilder 2000, that “[w]hile it is feasible for an RC to be linked to multiple antecedents by a rule of construal, as in the standard approach, to claim that they are linked by a movement dependency is problematic. It seems rather far-fetched to suppose that the antecedents in [(1)] could have originated inside the relative clause (say, as a conjoined DP) to then be split and distributed across two clausal conjuncts after raising (a kind of ‘reverse’ Across-The-Board raising).” (p.14). Also see Andrews (1975) and McKinney-Bock (2013), McKinney-Bock and Vergnaud (2014), Radford (2017,§5.2) for non-raising analyses, and Baltin (2005).

2 Split antecedents with different grammatical functions belonging to the same sentence

The cases of RCs with split antecedents belonging to the same sentence appear to be possible in Italian and English as nonrestrictive RCs. See (4)a. and (4)b.), but not as restrictives. See the ungrammaticality of (5)a.-e.:

(4)a. Se Carlo_i non amava più Anna_j, i quali_{i,j} d'altra parte non si erano mai voluti veramente bene, una ragione c'era.

If C. was no longer in love with A., that at any rate never really loved each other, there was a motive.

⁵ Overfelt notes that examples like (i) below suggest, contrary to these expectations, that a negative polarity item can be licensed in the extraposed material even given split antecedence:

(i) [_{DP} Every intern]₁ left and [_{DP} every employee]₁ quit [_{CP} who were in **any** of the basement offices]₁.

b. Se Piero_i non si trova più tanto bene con Ida_j, tra i quali_{i+j} d'altronde non c'è mai stata una vera amicizia,...

If P. no longer likes to stay with I., between whom in any event there never was a real friendship,...

(5)a. *The dog is chasing the cat which were fighting (Andrews 1975,116)

b. *A man met a woman yesterday who were similar (Guéron 1980,648 credited to N.Chomsky)

c. *The boy_i looked at the girl_j who_{i+j} both like sports. (De Vries 2002,67)

d. *A man visited a woman (yesterday) who were similar (Baltin 2005,255)

e. *Il ragazzo guardava la ragazza che entrambi amano gli sport (same as (5)c.)

Yet to judge from Chomsky (1975,fn47) referring to what would later be published as ex. (26) in Perkins (1982,284) similar sentences are apparently possible in Navajo (also see the discussion in Andrews 1975,116ff):

(6) L'ééchaą mósi yinoólchéét ahigáné'é'. (Navajo - Perkins 1982,284),

dog_i cat_j it-is-chasing-it-along they_{i,j}-are-fighting-REL

'*The dog_i is chasing the cat_j, which_{i,j} were fighting'.

In fact, they appear possible even in English, provided that the two antecedents are related by a symmetric predicate. See Poschmann, Bargmann, Götze, Holler, Sailer, Webelhuth and Zimmermann (2016), citing an example, (7), from Hoeksema (1986,69):

(7) We always let those boys_i play with those girls_j [who_{i,j} know one another from elementary school].

Once again, such cases of split antecedents are impossible in languages with pre-nominal relative clauses. See Del Gobbo (2010,2015) on Chinese.

A raising analysis for this second type of split antecedent relatives would again seem to require special assumptions, while the same discourse grammar analysis of nonrestrictives mentioned above appears to be able to provide an analysis for this second type of split antecedent relatives.

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