

Pseudorelatives as Form-Copy: A Minimalist Analysis

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This paper revisits the syntax of French pseudorelatives in a minimalist fashion. I argue that they are not a hybrid syntactic category and propose a Form-Copy (FC) analysis (Chomsky 2021). Pseudorelatives (1) have traditionally been analyzed as hybrid, combining properties of relative and complement clauses.

- (1) Marie voi-t le chat **qui cour-t.**
Mary see-PRS.3SG the cat **that run-PRS.3SG**
'Mary sees the cat running.'

Pseudorelatives differ systematically from genuine relative clauses, as widely shown in the literature (Radford 1975; Kayne 1995; Guasti 1988; Cinque 1992; Casalicchio 2013). Among a much larger body of evidence, it is shown that pseudorelatives are restricted to perception contexts, require direct event perception, and resist independent temporal or propositional interpretation. While a relative clause freely allows temporal displacement, the same configuration is degraded under a pseudorelative reading (2). Pseudorelatives disfavor epistemic or modal embeddings (3), which are fully acceptable in relatives.

- (2) *Marie voi-t le chat **qui cour-ai-t hier.**
Mary see-PRS.3SG the cat **that run-IPF-3SG yesterday**
'Mary sees the cat running yesterday.'
- (3) *Marie voi-t le chat **qui peu-t cour-ir.**
Mary see-PRS.3SG the cat **that can-PRS.3SG run-INF**
'Mary sees the cat being able to run.'

This hybridity has been captured by movement-based accounts (relativization, operator movement, chain formation). Such analyses rely on successive-cyclic movement and multiple copies, assumptions that are called into question in recent minimalist work. I argue that pseudorelatives can be analyzed as regular clausal complements; their apparent relative-like morphology (*qui*) reflects the externalization of a finite clause, not the presence of a relative operator.

The analysis replaces successive-cyclic movement with FC (Chomsky 2021): Access at the CI-interface determines the referential scope of the shared DP, while Externalization at the SM-interface dictates the pronunciation of the matrix occurrence. In other words, FC establishes a Copy relation between referentially identical elements within a single phasal domain, deleting the lower occurrence. I assume that syntactic objects can be merged in multiple theta-positions, and that their distribution at the interfaces is determined by phasehood.

In particular, eventive perception complements in French lack a full CP phase, making the embedded domain accessible to FC. In (1), *le chat* is merged in two theta-positions: the object of the matrix verb and the subject of the embedded predicate. Because no phase boundary intervenes, the matrix and embedded occurrences remain accessible within the same domain. FC then applies across the two

domains, establishing a Copy relation between the matrix object and the embedded subject and deleting the latter at PF (4):

(4) [CP [TP Marie voit ... [VP [DP **le chat**] [FinP qui [TP [DP ~~le chat~~] [T court] ...]]]]]

In (4), *le chat* is realized as the matrix object, while the embedded clause surfaces as a finite clause introduced by *qui* with no overt subject. No movement or relativization is involved: the dependency follows from the Copy relation and deletion at the interfaces.

The Copy relation cannot be established across phases: the complement in (4) does not constitute a full CP, merging only FinP: the embedded occurrence of the DP remains accessible and does not violate the PIC.

The properties of pseudorelatives follow from the interaction of FC. In minimalist terms, they reduce to perception complements, and their hybrid nature requires no dedicated syntactic category.

(Length: 450 words, excluding the title, keywords, linguistic examples, and references)

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