An Accessibility Hierarchy Pattern for Resumptive Pronouns in Spoken French

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Abstract   On the basis of the results of a corpus study on Colloquial French, which show that the distribution of resumptive pronouns globally matches the Accessibility Hierarchy , we argue that resumptive pronouns in French relative clauses are not intrusive and that resumptive and gapped relatives involve different syntactic derivations belonging to different registers. We explain the lack of the highest subject restriction in Colloquial French, in contrast with (other) languages displaying regular resumptive relatives, by the special nature of French subject clitics as agreement markers. This conclusion and the distribution of subject clitics we found in the corpus reinforces the analysis of the relative complementizer *qui* as a grammaticalized form of *que*+obligatory resumption *il*.

Keywords   Resumptive pronouns. Spoken French. Relative clauses. Accessibility hierarchy. Corpus.

Summary   1 Introduction. – 2 The study. – 3 Discussion: RCS with RPS Are a Separate Strategy. – 4 Subject Resumptives and the *que-qui* Rule. – 5 Conclusion.

1   Introduction

The use of resumptive pronouns (RPs) in relative clauses is a robust phenomenon that is well attested crosslinguistically. Typologically, languages are standardly divided into two groups: those displaying 'true', i.e. productive RPs, either optional or obligatory in standard relatives (e.g. Hebrew, Modern Standard Arabic, Irish, Vata, etc.), and those displaying 'intrusive' RPs, only marginally surfacing in those relative clauses that involve complex (i.e. long) dependencies or island environments (Sells 1984). While the exact characterization and status of intrusive pronouns has been recently challenged experimentally (Ferreira, Swets 2005; Alexopoulou, Keller 2007; Heestand, Xiang, Polinsky 2011) and in corpus studies (Prince 1990; 1998), it is still part of received knowledge.

Romance languages are typically classified as languages with intrusive pronouns. Interestingly, while the distribution of RPs in islands and other difficult positions has been investigated, both in corpora and in experimental studies (Godard 1989; Sportiche 2018) very little is known about the distribution of resumptive pronouns in regular relatives, beyond the simple anecdotical observation that RPs are deemed ungrammatical in the standard language, but surface in spontaneous production. An example in French is given in (1).

(1)   un monsieur que je lui ai vendu ça (Godard 1989, 55)
        a man that I CL.DAT have sold this
        'A man I sold this to'

The aim of this short paper is to have a look at the distribution of resumptive pronouns in spoken French by performing a corpus study, and to discuss the results at the light of the various analyses that have been proposed for resumptive pronouns, and their predictions, providing a contribution to the debate.

A strict intrusive-type analysis, where resumptive pronouns are analyzed as a last resort rescue strategy for structures that would be ungrammatical with a gap (Chao, Sells 1983; Sells 1984, among others) would predict that there should be no resumptive at all in normal relative clauses in French.

A weaker version of this approach, where resumptive pronouns are seen as a repair strategy for structures that are difficult to process (Shlonsky 1992; Pesetsky 1998; Asudeh 2012), predicts that their distribution follows a pattern which is directly opposite to that of the Accessibility hierarchy in (2) (Keenan, Comrie 1977): the less accessible a syntactic position, hence the more difficult to process, the more likely a speaker will be to resort to the intrusive strategy. We thus expect French RPs to be very rare (if ever present) in subject rela-

tives, a little more frequent in object relatives, and more and more used in positions that are further down the scale in (2).[1]

(2) Accessibility Hierarchy
Subject > Direct Object > Indirect Object > Oblique > Genitive > Object of comparison

A radical alternative view would be to say that the French resumptive pronouns are 'regular' resumptives, namely simple reference tracking devices (McCloskey 1990; 2017; Heestand, Xiang, Polinsky 2011). Given this view gapped Relative clauses and RP Relative clauses in French would represent two independent relativization strategies, one involving a gap, one involving an anaphoric relation, available as primary strategies in different registers (Bianchi 2004; Sichel 2014). We would then expect both strategies to adhere independently to the Accessibility Hierarchy: so subject relative clauses are expected to be more frequent in both strategies, followed by object relatives of both kinds, and so on and so forth along the scale in (2).

A potential problem for this analysis is that this is not what is observed in languages that display 'regular' resumptive pronouns. These languages typically display what has been called the (highest) subject restriction, namely a ban on subject resumptives, either an absolute one (as in Serbo-Croatian) or only in the higher subject position (Hebrew, Irish). This restriction is illustrated in (3-4) and (5-6), for Serbo-Croatian and Hebrew, respectively.

(3) **Serbo-Croatian simple subject relative**
čovjek [$_{RC}$ što je   (***on**)   sreo Petra] (Boškovic 2009, 82)
Man C$_{REL}$ PRES.3SG he.NOM met Petar.ACC
'the man that he met Petar'

(4) **Serbo-Croatian embedded subject relative**
čovjek [$_{RC}$ što tvrdis [$_{RC}$ da je (??**on**)   sreo Petra]
man C$_{REL}$ claim.2SG C PRES.3SG he.NOM met Petar.ACC
'the man that you claim that (he) met Petar'

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1   Keenan and Comrie's (1977) Accessibility Hierarchy is an implicational scale elaborated on the basis of approximately 50 languages on accessibility of their primary relativization strategy according to the grammatical function of the RC head. It captures the fact that while all 50 languages allow relativization over a subject, fewer languages display object relative clauses, and fewer and fewer languages allow relativization of further positions along the scale. Each step of the hierarchy implies the preceding steps, so that a relativization strategy available for a given step of the scale is necessarily available for all preceding steps. Keenan and Comrie make the hypothesis that this typological implication correlates with processing complexity, hence turning the Accessibility Hierarchy into a "predictor of psychological complexity" (61). Their hypothesis was first supported by Hawkins and Keenan (1974; 1987) study on language acquisition, and then confirmed again and again through an impressive number of studies (see Lau, Tanaka 2021 for a review).

(5) **Hebrew simple subject relatives**
     hine ha-iš   še (***hu**) nafal la-bor. (Shlonsky 1992)
     here the-man that he fell.3ᴍs into-the-pit
     'Here is the man that fell into the pit.'

(6) **Hebrew embedded subject clauses**
     hine ha-iš še xašavta   še (**hu**) nafal la-bor.
     here the-man that thought.2 ᴍs that he fell.3ᴍs into-the-pit
     'Here is the man that you thought that (he) fell into the pit.'

There are many possible interpretations of the Highest subject restriction (Cf. Erlewine 2020; Shlonsky 1992), which we will not discuss here given the scope of this paper (but see below, section 3). Be as it may, these data suggest that there are specific constraints associated with the distribution of 'normal' resumptive pronouns, that might interfere with the predictions of the Accesibility Hierarchy.

The paper is organized as follows. Section 2 presents the study, discussing the Corpus that has been used, the search that has been performed, and some caveats on the absolute figures that were found. Section 3 presents the results of the study, and the relative distribution of RPs in relative clauses of various kind. Section 4 discusses the results. Section 5 concludes the paper.

2   The study

2.1   The Corpus

The corpus we studied is made of two Spoken corpora stemming from the project *Enquêtes sociolinguistiques à Orléans* collected in the city of Orleans, respectively between 1968 and 1971 (ESLO 1), and since 2008 (ESLO 2). Among the many diverse materials that are collected in the corpora, we selected the Interviews modules. We made this choice because interviews are both the largest section of the corpus (182.5 hours in ESLO1, 150 hours in ESLO 2), and are also likely to reflect spontaneous usage being face-to face-interactions. The fact that they involve systematically a researcher and an interviewee, in a clearly unbalanced situation in terms of status, prestige and empowerment, makes them also less than ideal. As we shall see, this might explain the relatively small number of relative clauses containing a resumptive that we found.

2.2 What We Counted: Few Resumptive Relative Clauses

We counted resumptive relative clauses introduced by *que* or *qu'* (a variant of *que* when it is followed by a word starting with a vowel) that do not contain any island nor any embedding. For every resumptive that we encountered in the corpus, we coded its grammatical function: subject, object, indirect object, oblique-ARG (including all positions where a preposition would be required), oblique-ADJ, genitive.[2] An example of each kind is given below.

The head of the relative clause and the resumptive pronoun are signaled in bold.

(7) Subject
il y a le **voisin qu'il** habite au-dessus là (ESLO1_ENT_014C)
there is the neighbor that he lives upstairs there
'There is a neighbor who lives upstairs over there'

(8) Direct Object
elle a **quelques collégiens** qu'elle **les** fait travailler (ESLO2_ENT_1045C)
she has some students that she CL.ACC make work
'She has some students who she supervises'

(9) Indirect object
une **personne amie** que je veux **lui** offrir quelque chose (ESLO1_ENT_067C)
a person friend that I want CL.DAT offer something
'A friendly person I wanted to offer something to'

(10) Oblique-ARG
une **réforme** de l'orthographe qu'on **en** a parlé y a un moment (ESLO1_ENT_030_C)
a reform of the ortography that we CL.IO talked it some time ago
'A reform of the writing system that we talked about some time ago'

(11) Oblique-ADJ
a. le premier **cœur de ville** qu'on **y** marche à pied (ESLO2_ENT_1084C)
the first heart of town that we CL.LOC walk at foot
'The first city center where you can walk'

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2 This coding does not match entirely the categories included in the traditional Accessibility hierarchy in (2), but gives a more fine-grained classification of grammatical positions. In particular, while oblique is only defined as oblique "arguments of the main predicate" (Keenan, Comrie 1977, 66), we find in our corpus both obliques of the former kind (which we label Oblique-ARG) and obliques that are not selected by the predicate, as in the example (11) in the text. What we label Oblique-ADJ thus stands for resumptives with an oblique function not selected by the verb, such as locatives and other adjuncts.

 b. les **lettres** que c'est toujours mes formules **là-dessus** (ESLO1_ENT_142_C)
 the letters that it is always my expressions over there
 'The letters containing my expressions'

(12) Genitive
 y a **des enfants** que **leur** intelligence se développe plus tôt (ESLO1_ENT_023C)
 there are some children that their intelligence it develops more early
 'Some children have an earlier developing intelligence'

Overall, we counted 85 resumptive relative clauses of this kind in ESLO 1 and 36 in ESLO 2. These figures, and those concerning the total number of relative clauses introduced by *que* and *qu'*[3] are summarized in Table 1 below.

Table 1 Numbers of resumptive and total relative clauses introduced by que/qu' in the corpus

Type of RC	ESLO 1	ESLO 2
Resumptive RCs	85	36
total RCs	1713	1132

A first apparent result displayed in Table 1 is that resumptive RCs represent a very tiny minority of the RCs attested in the corpus. These very small proportions of resumptive RCs could at first sight confirm the predictions of an intrusive analysis, as they appear to suggest that resumptive pronouns are at best very marginal in French in simple contexts. But we believe this conclusion is not granted and that this small proportion calls for another explanation. Remember that these data come from formal interviews between a researcher and the interviewee, that present a clearly unbalanced situation with respect to prestige, status and empowerment. This setting might play a role in artificially reducing the production of resumptives, which are strongly and explicitly stigmatized in France as not part of what we might call Standard French.

 Standard French is used here to mean the register of European French that is generally taught in school, employed in writing, and used in formal speech situations. As such, it is generally characterized as "good usage" (e.g., by Zribi-Hertz 1994). On the other hand, the register of French that is typically used in more familiar speech situations have received many names in the literature: "non-standard

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3 We excluded from the count so-called prepositionless indirect object relative clauses, such as *La fille que je te parle* (The girl that I talk), which involve both a gap and a missing preposition. We only included in the count regular gapped relatives and relatives with a matching resumptive.

118

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57, 57, 2023, 113-130

French" (e.g. Lambrecht 1988), "conversational European French" (e.g. Waugh, Fonseca-Greber 2002), "colloquial French" (e.g. Roberge 1986; Auger 1994), "advanced French" (e.g., Zribi-Hertz 1994), "spoken French" (e.g. De Cat 2007; or *français parlé*, e.g. Blanche-Benveniste 1997), "vernacular French" (Larrivée, Skrovec 2019). A number of well-described features characterize the relevant register: the use of *ça* 'that' instead of Standard French *cela* 'that' and, *on* 'we' instead of Standard French *nous* 'we', higher deletion rates of the expletive pronoun *il* 'it' and the negative particle *ne* etc. It is rather clear that the examples listed above all belong to this register, that we shall call Colloquial French.

Numerous studies (De Cat 2007; Culbertson 2010, among others) have shown that most individual speakers have access to both registers and maintain grammars encoding both the Standard French and Colloquial French registers of their language, either of which may be drawn upon to produce (or comprehend) an utterance. The claim that speakers maintain more than a single grammar has been independently proposed many times to account for variation within and across populations of speakers (Croft 2000; Yang 2002; Zribi-Hertz 2006). If this is true, then it is possible to interpret the low rates of resumptive relatives in our small corpus as the byproduct of the formal setting, that led most speakers to unconsciously shift into Standard French. If this interpretation is on the right track, we can take the data we obtain concerning resumptive pronouns in RCs for what they are, a very small corpus of spontaneous data in Colloquial French, without drawing further conclusions concerning their status with respect to the standard form. What we shall do instead, is rather focus on the relative distribution of resumptive pronouns within that small corpus. While the small quantity of data does not allow to perform any statistical analysis on these results, we can draw some descriptive considerations that appear to point towards some clear directions.[4]

2.3   What We Found: Relative Distribution of Resumptives in the Various Positions

Tables 2 and 3 report the distribution of resumptive pronouns in the various positions that were coded: subject, object, indirect object, argumental oblique, adjoined oblique, genitive.[5]

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4 We also looked at Multicultural Parisian French corpus (Gadet, Guerin 2016). Because of its smaller volume and its higher level of colloquiality, relative clauses are overall very rare and this very small scale did not allow for any interesting counting.

5 Light headed relative clauses are not taken into account.

Table 2   Grammatical function of RPs in normal RCs in ESLO 1

Grammatical function	ESLO 1			
	Resumptive RCs	Percentage of total resumptive	Gapped RCs	Ratio RP/gapped
Subject	49	57.6	4693	1.04%
Direct object	21	24.7	1628	1.29%
Indirect object	6	7		
Oblique-ARG	4	4,7		
Oblique-ADJ	3	3.5		
Genitive	2	2.3		
Total	85	app. 100		

Table 3   Grammatical function of RPs in normal RCs in ESLO 2

Grammatical function	ESLO 2			
	Resumptive RCs	Percentage of total resumptive	Gapped RCs	Ratio RP/gapped
Subject	16	44.4	3409	0.47%
Direct object	11	30.5	1096	1.00%
Indirect object	1	2.7		
Oblique-ARG	5	13,8		
Oblique-ADJ	1	2,7		
Genitive	2	5.5		
Total	36	app. 100		

There are some differences between ESLO 1 and ESLO 2 concerning both absolute figures and relative distributions, that might be due to a number of independent and extralinguistic factors: they might be due to different coding strategies[6] or to differences concerning the format of the interview; the social status of participants (participants in ESLO2 are on average more elderly and more educated than those in ESLO1; in ESLO1, there are more participants who are workers, small traders or artisans) or that of interviewers (the team behind ESLO 1 was British while that responsible for ESLO 2 is locally based). Sticking to similarities, though, some clear asymmetries appear to emerge.

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6   Two different research groups collected and transcribed the interviews. Since in speech *qu'il* and *qui* are in many cases homophonous (/ki/), it is possible that some variation between the two is due to different decisions concerning this particular transcription. We cannot exclude on the other hand that some diachronic change might be also in place.

Subject resumptives are by far the most frequent: they account for, respectively, over 50 per cent and over 40 per cent of the total resumptive pronouns we found in relative clauses. (Direct) object resumptives follow (respectively, 25 per cent and 30 per cent), and then indirect objects and other PP arguments, followed by adjunct and genitive positions. Notice that this asymmetric distribution cannot be simply explained as the effect of the prevalence of subject relatives over other relatives, in general. If we analyze the ratio of resumptive pronouns with respect to gaps for the same grammatical function, we see that while these ratios are generally very low (see above), they are also relatively stable across grammatical functions, at least if we compare subject and object relatives. This means that the majority of subject RPs in our mini-corpus appears to go beyond a simple by-product of the fact that subject relative clauses are more frequent in general.
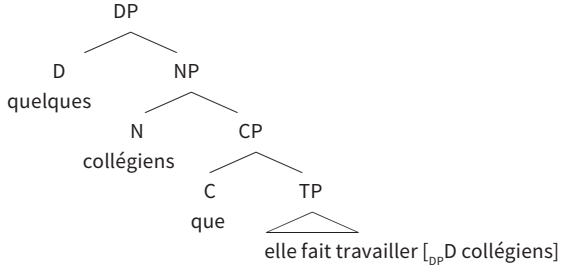
3 Discussion: RCS with RPS Are a Separate Strategy

The data presented in the preceding section, though very reduced in scope, are clear: resumptive pronouns in the French relative clauses we observed are not intrusive, neither in the strong nor in the weak sense: they can appear in simple relative clauses outside of islands and other complex embeddings that might be difficult to process. They do not pattern in their distribution as predicted by an analysis in terms of last resort, since they are more available and more frequent in accessible positions (including the subject) than in less accessible positions. In other words, they appear to follow the Accessibility Hierarchy proposed by Keenan and Comrie (1977) as a universal implicational scale for the relativizability of different grammatical functions. This suggests that resumptive pronouns in French relative clauses are not parasitic to gaps, but represent an alternative and separate strategy for relativization, that obeys as such unsurprisingly this universal scale. The next question is what strategy this is.
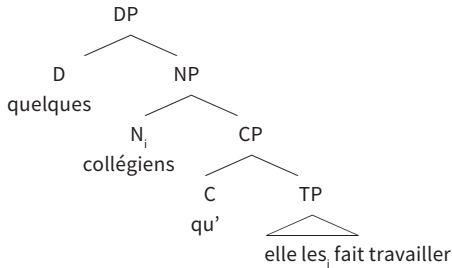
As suggested by some (Bianchi 2004; Sichel 2014), a possibility is to assume that gapped and RPs relative clauses correspond to two different derivations for externally headed relative clauses: raising and matching. In gapped relative clauses, the head raises from its RC-internal position to its edge, nominalizing the clause (Bianchi 1999; Donati, Cecchetto 2011; Cecchetto, Donati 2015), leaving a gap. In RP RCs, there is no raising of the head, which is externally merged, and the resumptive pronoun marks the obligatory anaphoric relation (matching) between the external nominal head and a position internal to the RC. These two analyses are sketched in (13) and (14) for an

object relative clause corresponding to 'some students that she forces to work' without (13) and with (14) a resumptive.[7]

(13) N-Raising (Donati, Cecchetto 2011; Cecchetto, Donati 2015)

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                    DP
            ┌───────┴───────┐
            D               NP
        quelques      ┌─────┴─────┐
                      N           CP
                  collégiens   ┌──┴──┐
                               C     TP
                              que     ╱╲
                              elle fait travailler [_DP D collégiens]
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(14) Matching

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                    DP
            ┌───────┴───────┐
            D               NP
        quelques      ┌─────┴─────┐
                      N_i          CP
                  collégiens    ┌──┴──┐
                               C     TP
                              qu'     ╱╲
                              elle les_i fait travailler
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Erlewine (2020), following Demirdache (1997), goes further and assumes that the RP in relatives like (14) moves at LF into the edge of the clause, and explains the highest subject constraint observed in many languages involving regular resumptive RCs in these terms: the RP in subject position cannot move at LF for the same reason movement is generally excluded from the higher subject position in non-null subject languages. This is why RPs are banned from the (highest) subject position.

This part of the analysis cannot be extended to French given our data: as we saw, there is no ban on subject resumptives in French. There are two ways to go. Either Erlewine is wrong, and the ban on subject resumptives in many languages is not due to movement at LF of the RP but to some independent reason. Or French subject resumptives are special, and crucially different from subject RPs in these other languages, which explains why they are not restricted in their

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7 In (14) there is of course a gap at the complement position of *travailler*, corresponding to the cliticized pronoun *les*. But unlike in (13), the head noun *collégiens* in (14) does not undergo raising from within the relative clause and has no trace in CP. This is what we mean when we describe (14) as gapless.

distribution as other subject RPs are. In the next section, we shall briefly argue in favor of the latter alternative.

4 Subject Resumptives and the *que-qui* Rule

It is a fact that subject doubling, where a nominal subject and a coreferential subject clitic co-occur (Marie$_i$ elle$_i$ mange 'Mary$_i$ she$_i$ eats'), is a common feature of Colloquial French well beyond relative clauses. Two families of analyses have been proposed to account for the structure. Researchers like Kayne (1991), Rizzi (1986), De Cat (2005) among others analyze it as a case of dislocation, where the NP subject is dislocated into a topic position in the left periphery, while the subject clitic is a syntactically argument-bearing pronoun merged in SpecTP phonologically cliticized to the verb. Other researchers, in particular Roberge (1986), Auger (1994), and more recently Culbertson (2010), Palasis (2015), Liang, Burnett, Donati (2023), argue that the subject clitic is an agreement marker base-generated in T. Evidence for this analysis includes: 1) in many corpus studies of spoken French, subject doubling is nearly categorical (over 70%), as is the absence of *ne* in negative sentences (*ne* is attested in under 5% of sentences); 2) regardless of whether it is followed by a subject clitic, no phonological or prosodic features single out the subject DP as being dislocated; and 3) the subject clitic is acceptable when the sentence is in broad-focus contexts, showing that DP subject is not necessarily interpreted as a topic (Culbertson 2010).

If this second type of analysis is on the right track, and subject resumptives in colloquial French are agreement markers rather than pronouns, subject 'resumptives' in relative clauses are not expected to ever move, nor even at LF. This might thus explain why subject resumptives do not obey the (highest) subject restriction in French. Colloquial French would thus be a type of null subject language similar to those Italo-Romance dialects that display obligatory agreement markers in the form of proclitics (Brandi, Cordin [1981] 1989; Rizzi 1986; Poletto 2000; Roberts 2014; Manzini, Savoia 2005; see also Cardinaletti, Repetti 2008 for an opposite view and Pescarini 2022 for a recent critical overview).

The data discussed in this paper showing that subject resumptives are way more frequent than any other resumptive pronoun in French relative clauses might also shed light on an old puzzle concerning French, namely the obligatory substitution of *que* with *qui* with subject gaps, the so-called *que-qui* rule, illustrated in (15).

(15) a. J'ai acheté la chaise *que/qui était conseillée dans le catalogue.
          I-have bought the chair.FEM that was recommended.FEM in the catalogue
       b. Quelle chaise. FEM crois-tu *que/qui était conseillée.FEM dans le catalogue?

123

Annali di Ca' Foscari. Serie occidentale   e-ISSN 2499-1562
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Which chair think-you that was recommended in the catalogue?

The exact analysis to be given to this phenomenon has been and still is subject to a wide debate. Some (stemming from Kayne 1976) connect the impossibility of having *que* followed by a gap to the ban on having 'that' followed by a gap in English (the so-called 'that-trace' phenomenon), and give the two phenomena a unified treatment. For example, Erlewine reduces both to an anti-locality effect, prohibiting movement from a Spec (Spec, TP) to the closest c-commanding specifier, (Spec, CP). The two languages escape the constraint either deleting the complementizer ('that'), or by using a higher complementizer (*qui*) (see also Pesetsky 2016 for a similar proposal).

No matter the details of the analysis, there is one fact which is clearly at odds with this unification treatment, namely the fact that the 'that-trace' phenomenon does not hold in local relative clauses in English (16a, in contrast with questions, 16b) while the '*que*-trace' phenomenon does in French (see 15a and 15b).

(16) a.   I bought the chair that/*ø was recommended in the catalogue.
      b.   Which chair do you think *that/ ø was recommended in the catalogue?

Other influential analyses have suggested that *qui* is a contracted form *que+il* = *qui*, by reasonable epenthesis rules (Cf. Rooryck 2000; Taraldsen 2001; Rizzi, Shlonsky 2007). Interestingly, this analysis corresponds to a grammaticalized version of the non-grammaticalized data that we observe in our corpus. In both cases, the complementizer *que* is followed by a subject clitic. Our data, where we observe the systematic use of the subject resumptive, can be seen as a new indirect piece of evidence in favor of this family of analyses. Another interesting piece of evidence that goes in the same direction is the widespread insecurity that French speakers exhibit when it comes to writing the sound /*ki*/, not knowing in many cases whether it ought to be written *qui* or *qu'il*. Witness the many blogs, journal articles and normative recommendations on this issue.[8]

As for the anti-agreement effect that is entailed by this analysis of *qui* as *qu+il* (as in the example 15a, where there is a mismatch between the head noun, which is feminine, and the epenthetic subject clitic, which is *il*, the default), notice that similar effects are displayed in other Romance languages displaying clitic agreement markers. An example in Florentine is given in (17) (from Brandi, Cordin 1989).

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8   A quick google search we launched while writing this paper returned are 125.000 hits for question "*qui* ou *qu'il*". This is insecurity might be due to various factors, cf. *Le bon usage* (2016, 1002-3). We thank an anonymous reviewer for pointing this reference to us.

(17) le ragazze [che {*le hanno/ gli ha parlato} ieri alla riunione]
      The girls-FEM.PL that CL.FEM.PL have/CL.MASC.SING have spoken yesterday at the
      meeting

In (17), just like in (15a), the subject clitic is a default form that does not agree with the head noun. Going back to our corpus data, the vast majority of the subject resumptives attested do indeed correspond to *il* or *ils*, and are hence fully compatible with them being a non-epenthetic variant of invariable *qui*.[9] These relative clauses introduced by *qu'il*, as well as those introduced by the grammaticalized *qui*, can be derived as regular raising relative clauses (as 13), with the subject argument directly extracted from a postverbal position (as in Rizzi, Shlonsly 2007's criterial derivation). It is a well-known fact about French that postverbal subjects, whether in situ or moved, display anti-agreement effects and require the clitic *il*. The classical data are reproduced in (18) and (19).

(18) a.   Trois filles sont arrivées
           three girls are arrived.FEM.PL
      b.   Il est arrivé trois filles
           it is arrived three girls

(19) a.   *Combien de filles crois-tu que sont arrivées?
           how many of girls think.2SING-you that are arrived FEM.PL
      b.   Combien de filles crois-tu qu'il est arrivé?
           how many of girls think.2SING-you that it is arrived

As for those few cases in our corpus where the clitic does indeed carry unambiguous agreement features (as in the example 20 below), we are back to the matching derivation (14): no raising is involved and the clitic feature in T (*elle*) provides directly the anaphoric binding that yields the matching interpretation.

(20) Moi j'ai une fille qu'elle est dans le métier de charcutier (ESLO1_ENT_043_C)
      me I-have a girl that she is in the profession of butcher

If this is true, there would thus be two kinds of subject relatives in French: those involving anti-agreeing *il* (whether epenthetic or

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9   While the majority of the subject RPs are introduced by *qu'il/ils* in ESLO, it is also true that their head is mostly masculine and singular. Hence this distribution is only *compatible* with a non-epenthetic invariant *qui*, but does not provide 'positive' evidence for it. There is only one case of 'anti-agreement' in ESLO 2, where the head noun is a feminine noun *personne*:
(i) la personne […] qu'il est là en France
the person.FEM that he is here in France.

not), derived through raising of the relative head from a postverbal position; those involving an agreeing clitic, directly matching with an externally merged head and involving no raising at all. It would be interesting to investigate whether these differences concerning agreement of the subject marker correlate with differences in reconstruction facts, as predicted if reconstruction only correlates with raising (Cf. Sportiche 2006).

5 Conclusion

This paper provides a new piece of evidence against traditional rescue/repair analyses for 'intrusive' resumptive pronouns in Romance relative clauses. Our data from a colloquial French corpus show that resumptive pronouns, though marginally, indeed exist in simple relative clauses and their distribution follows the Accessibility Hierarchy. These results led us to suggest that gapped relatives and resumptive relatives are two independent relativization strategies in French: the former is derived by raising, the latter by matching.

Given the fact that unlike 'true' RPs, RPs in French do not obey the Higher Subject restriction, we argue that subject RPs, which are the most frequent in the corpus, are not pronouns, but agreement markers. Going back to the famous *que-qui* rule associated with subject extraction, we argue that subject relatives introduced by the invariant form *qu'il* represent a non-grammaticalized variant of those introduced by the epenthetic form *qui*, both corresponding to a derivation where the subject raises from a postverbal position.

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129
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