DISCUSSIONS

RELATIVE CLAUSES AND BINDING IN FRENCH:
THE SOLUTION OF BOUCHARD (1984)

JOHAN ROORYCK
National Fund for Scientific Research (Belgium)

1. The basic aim of Bouchard 1984 is to construct a grammatical framework within GB-theory, which does not refer specifically to empty categories. In order to achieve this goal, he is forced to present an alternative analysis of French relative clauses. This analysis can be considered a variant of Pesetsky 1982, who in turn reformulates Kayne's 1976 solution for French relative clauses in the GB framework. We will try to show that the variant Bouchard develops does not give an adequate account of the elements in COMP position of the relative clauses in French with respect to the Binding conditions as specified by Chomsky 1981.

2. Relativization in Standard French involves movement of a Wh-phrase to COMP position.

(1)   a. La fille[\textsc{S},COMP qui][\textsc{s}, t, est venue.]

   b. La fille[\textsc{S},COMP que][\textsc{s}, tu as vue t,]

Bouchard 1984: 91 observes that two solutions are possible from a descriptive point of view. In the first solution, a Wh-phrase is moved to COMP taking the form of qui if it is nominative and que if it is accusative. This analysis has been criticized by Kayne 1976 as the "accusative alternation hypothesis." The other solution Bouchard presents is essentially Kayne's analysis adapted to GB: Kayne 1976 proposed a rule moving NP to COMP to delete it afterwards; Bouchard 1984 chooses to move an empty Wh-operator to COMP. In both cases, que is the complementizer que that
changes into *qui* in the environment of a *Wh*-subject, following the rule formulated by Pesetsky 1982.

\[ \text{COMP } \begin{array}{c} Wh_i \\
\] que \end{array} \rightarrow \text{COMP qui}_i Y \]

Relativization of *PP* moves a Wh-*PP* to COMP in Standard French⁴, and no deletion follows. Thus far, Bouchard’s analysis only reflects current assumptions in generative grammar on relativization in French.²

3. However, the analysis becomes much less convincing when Bouchard tries to relate the empty operator to Chomsky’s 1981 Avoid Pronoun Principle. Bouchard 1984: 127 assumes that this operator is an anaphor since it is Bound by the head of the relative clause. Referring to his analysis of infinitival clauses,³ he interprets the APP not as “Avoid a lexical pronoun” but as “Avoid a pronoun where an anaphor is possible.” As such, no reference to empty categories is needed. This principle should explain the unacceptability of relative clauses with resumptive pronouns in French, since an empty operator is preferred to a pronoun

(3)  
- a. La fille qu’elle est venue
- b. La fille que Jean l’a vue (Bouchard 1984: 126)

However, these sentences are the result of a productive process in popular French, and have been extensively dealt with by several authors (Damourette and Pichon 1911-1940: §1322; Guiraud 1966; Moignet 1974:171; Frei 1929:187).⁴ Since Bouchard tries to include Québec French into his analysis, the exclusion of phenomena in popular French cannot be justified. Moreover, Bouchard claims that his formulation of APP explains the unacceptability of the following sentences.

(4)  
- a. Le gars qui qui/que est venu
- b. Le gars qui/que que j’ai vu

In Bouchard’s approach, it is not clear why the principle APP applies differently in (3) and (4). Clearly, the Avoid Pronoun strategy is not the right way to handle these sentences. Rather, the classical “movement to COMP plus deletion of NP” of Kayne 1976 could explain both the acceptability of (3) and the impossibility of (4).²

4. A more serious problem for Bouchard’s analysis is the way he relates the unacceptability of doubly filled COMP in relative clauses to the possibility of such constructions in questions and headless relatives. According
to Bouchard, empty operators do not function in questions (5), and cannot function in headless relatives since there is no head to bind them (6).

(5) a. Qui qui est venu?
   b. Qui que tu as vu?

(6) a. Qui que ce soit...
   b. Qui qui a bu un jour va boire toute sa vie

On the basis of this evidence, Bouchard does not accept a filter excluding doubly filled COMP. He assumes that a Wh-phrase in doubly filled COMP is not accessible for Binding from outside and must be considered a pronominal. This conclusion may be correct for questions and headless relatives, since the Wh-phrase corefers freely (Bouchard 1984: 128). However, as Bouchard 1984: 92 remarks himself, Wh-PP in Quebec French can be doubled by que, which results in a doubly filled COMP. This case is a clear exception to Bouchard’s claim, since the Wh-PP is not a pronominal in the sense of condition A of the Binding theory (Chomsky 1981): the Wh-PP is Bound in its governing category.

(7) Joséphine, voyait la fille, avec qui j'ai que Louis était sorti

Taking Bouchard’s claim seriously, one should accept that Wh-PP is optionally Bound, depending on the insertion of the optional que in Québec French. It seems more fruitful to introduce a condition excluding doubly filled COMP in French, together with a dialect-specific restriction on deletion in COMP of non-NP. As for (5) and (6), independent arguments show that they do not contain instances of doubly filled COMP. For (5), Lefebre 1980: 21 has shown that adjuncts can be introduced between both Wh-elements of questions, suggesting that the interrogative element is in a topicalized position outside S’.

(8) Qui, hier, qui est venu?

(6a) must be considered a fixed expression, and (6b) should not be analyzed as a headless relative, but as an indefinite pronominal followed by a relative clause. Indefinite qui in (6b) should be analyzed on a par with celui in (9).

(9) Celui qui a bu un jour va boire toute sa vie

5. A third problem for Bouchard’s analysis of French relative clauses is the way he relates his formulation of APP to the unacceptability of lequel forms in restrictive relative clauses of NP5. Since Bouchard 1984 considers lequel a pronoun, the APP predicts the unacceptability of such sentences,
an empty operator being preferred to a pronoun. The acceptability of *lequel* in nonrestrictives is linked to the fact that the heads of these clauses do not govern the *COMP* position of the relative clauses, since this type of clause is like a parenthetical. The element in *COMP* cannot be Bound as an anaphor, and so a pronoun is possible. But even in Bouchard's formulation of condition B of the Binding theory, a pronoun must be freely indexed at *S*-structure. This is clearly not the case in (10).

(10) Théodore, a rencontré son voisin, qui est un homme très aimable

But if Bouchard is right in saying that the parenthetical status of nonrestric-
tive relative clauses prevents government of *COMP* by the antecedent of the relative clause, *lequel* should be contradictorily defined as an ungov-
erned anaphor in nonrestrictive relative clauses.

6. It will be clear that Bouchard's formulation of the APP as an Elsewhere Principle on anaphors does not explain the peculiarities of French relative clauses. As Iwakura 1985 has shown, similar criticism on Bouchard's Binding Theory seems to hold for his account of obligatory con-
trol. Bouchard treats *PRO* in infinitival questions as a pronoun, although it cannot be freely indexed (Iwakura 1985: 36). Consequently, Bouchard's claim for a framework without explicit appeal to empty categories is severely weakened by his characterization of anaphoric phenomena as pro-
nominal with respect to Binding conditions.

Author's address:

Dept. Linguïstiek
Blijde Inkomststraat 21
B-3000 Leuven

NOTES

1) Québec French can strand "strong" prepositions in the relative clause (Bouchard 1984: 92).
2) For an alternative analysis within GB, developing the “accusative alternation hypothesis,” see Rooryck (forthcoming).

3) But see Iwakura 1985.

4) Interestingly, Bouchard 1984 quotes three of these authors in his bibliography.

5) Damourette and Pichon 1911-1940: §1309 quote some sentences where lequel occurs in a restrictive relative clause, but this type of example is rather marginal.

REFERENCES


Rooryck, Johan. (forthcoming in the Actes du XVIIIe Congrès International de Linguistique et philologie Romanes 1986), Quel/qui: pronoms relatifs ou complémenteurs?

Received July 15, 1987.