

Resumption in Slavic: Phases, Cyclicity, and Case

Resumptive pronouns (RPs) in relative clauses in Slavic, as in Hebrew, Arabic, Irish, and elsewhere, present a potentially serious problem for the phase-based cyclic Spell-Out approach to derivational syntax presented in Chomsky 2001 (“Derivation by Phase” [DbP]). As noted previously (McCloskey 1990, Shlonsky 1992), the choice between a gap (*wh*-trace) and an RP in relative clauses appears to be governed by the type of element in C° : a fully-inflected relative pronoun in Spec-CP patterns with a gap, while a morphologically-invariant complementizer in C° (plus, by hypothesis, a base-generated null operator antecedent in Spec-CP) patterns with an RP. Under DbP, which involves cyclic Spell-Out at the completion of each phase, the phonological shape of the material dominated by v° appears to depend, in a counter-cyclic fashion, on material that has not yet been merged. This is precisely the kind of computational complexity that the cyclic-Spell-Out approach is designed to eliminate.

The central claim of this paper is that this type of counter-cyclicity is only apparent. The leading idea is that while either relativization strategy can apply in the initial (*v*) phase, the material merged in C° appropriately selects the structure that has already been merged. Selection is built in to the derivational process rather than working as a filter on its output, along the lines recently suggested in Frampton and Gutmann (to appear).

Note, additionally, that within Slavic there has been considerable recent debate concerning the basic distribution of RPs in relative clauses—that is, whether both structural and inherent Case need to be resumed, or just the latter (as in Toman 1998 and Pesetsky 1998). Previously unexamined data from Ukrainian are introduced to show that the resumption strategy applies more generally than was previously assumed, including in its domain unambiguous instances of structurally Case-marked positions as well (1b).

Taking the simplest case to illustrate, in the examples given in (1-3) a non-embedded direct object is relativized. For both relative pronouns and RPs, the foot of the chain contains an uninterpretable Case feature that, according to DbP, is “valued” via an agreement relation with the corresponding uninterpretable \bar{A} -features of v° . It is the next step in the derivation that proceeds “blindly” with respect to the apparent licensing dependency described above. In the event that an inflected relative pronoun is merged, as in the (a) examples, the *wh*-phrase with its *wh*-feature will remain “active” (despite its valued Case feature) and will evacuate the vP phase prior to cyclic Spell-Out via the escape hatch provided by v 's EPP feature. Only in this way does the *wh*-phrase remain accessible to the probe C° . Alternatively, in the event that the relativized position is resumed by a non-referential Case-marked pronoun, as in the (b) examples, the RP will remain in the domain of v° and be Spelled-Out upon completion of the vP phase. The crucial point here is that while a *wh*-phrase valued for Case is still active, since it has an unvalued, uninterpretable *wh*-feature, the RP contains just the Case feature. It can be valued and Spelled-Out immediately.

The derivation, in both cases, need not involve “look-ahead.” The choice of which element to pronounce in the CP system (the specifier or head) will depend on the features and constituents that are still active in the derivation. Following McCloskey's (1990) and Shlonsky's (1992) analyses of RPs in Irish and Hebrew (based, in part, on island-insensitivity facts that apply equally well to the Slavic cases of RPs discussed here), I will assume that the *ščo/co* relatives in Ukrainian, Polish, and Czech represent the phonetic realization of a CP system that has a non-overt operator merged into its specifier. Thus, the invariant C° head in the (b) examples with RPs is pronounced (in a “crash-proof” manner) only in case there is no subsequent requirement for an overt occurrence (of a relative pronoun) in Spec-CP.

Examples:

(1) Ukrainian

- a. Ce toj dim, jakyj ja bačyv včora.
this the house which:REL-PRON.ACC I:NOM saw yesterday
- b. Ce toj dim, **ščo** ja **joho** bačyv včora.
this the house COMP I:ACC RP:ACC saw yesterday
'This is the house that I saw yesterday.'

(2) Polish

- a. On spotkał tego chłopca, którego widziałeś wczoraj.
he met the boy whom:REL-PRON:ACC/GEN you-saw yesterday
- b. On spotkał tego chłopca, **co go** widziałeś wczoraj.
he met the boy COMP RP:ACC/GEN you-saw yesterday
'He met the boy that you saw yesterday.'

(3) Czech (Colloquial)

- a. To je ten chlap, kerýho viděli v tramvaji.
this is the guy whom:REL-PRON:ACC/GEN they-saw in streetcar
- b. To je ten chlap, **co ho** viděli v tramvaji.
this is the guy COMP RP:ACC/GEN they-saw in streetcar
'This is the guy that they saw in the streetcar.' [Toman 1998:310]

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