



French ‘de qui’ and the ‘subject island’ (Based on joint work with Anne Abeillé)

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dont

- ▶ complementizer (Godard 1988)
- ▶ animate or inanimate antecedent
- ▶ only for relative clauses

- ▶ not used in pied-piping constructions

de qui

- ▶ preposition + pronoun
- ▶ *qui* 'who': [+ animate]

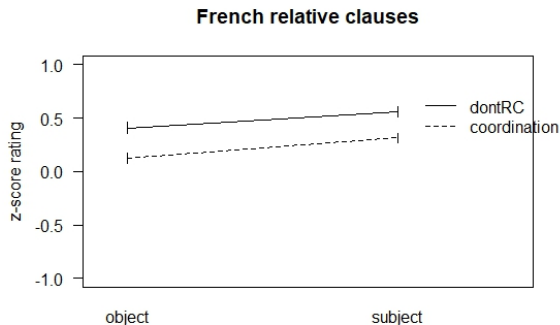
- ▶ for questions (ask for animated) and RC (animated antecedent)
- ▶ used in pied-piping constructions

dont and the 'subject island'

Previous talk:

Small preference ($p < .01$) for subject conditions over object conditions (with or without extraction), but no interaction:

Abeillé et al. (2018)



Dont is an exception?

Following Tellier 1991 (a.o.):

subject island constraint only for pronouns (not for complementizers)

- (1) * *un linguiste de **qui** les parents _ ont déménagé à Chartres*
 a linguist of who the parents have moved to Chartres
 'a linguist whose parents moved to Chartres'

- (2) *un linguiste de **qui** vous avez rencontré les parents _*
 a linguist of who you have met the parents
 'a linguist whose parents you met'

(Tellier 1991: 89-90, judgements from Tellier)

De qui in the corpus
in relative clauses
in wh-questions

Experiments on *de qui* relative clauses
with animacy mismatch
without animacy mismatch

Conclusions

The Frantext corpus

Frantext

- ▶ Corpus of 5118 texts from the French literature
- ▶ from 2000 to 2013: 196 texts
- ▶ annotated for lemma (sometimes pos)
- ▶ query [de qui]: 449 items
- ▶ manual annotation for type (RC or question) function (complement of subject, object, verb, etc.)

Previsions

Following Tellier 1991:

- ▶ no (or marginal amount of) extractions out of subject, both in relative clauses and in *wh*-questions

Following Chomsky 2008:

- ▶ only extraction out of subject of unaccusatives or passives

Our Hypothesis:

- ▶ constraint on extraction out of subjects for interrogatives, but not for relative clauses
- ▶ similar pattern for *dont* and for *de qui* relative clauses

Repartition of *de qui* in the corpus

Among 449 occurrences:

relative clauses	199
free relative clauses	89
wh-questions	129
cleft sentences	1
noise	31

- └ De qui in the corpus
- └ in relative clauses

Examples from Frantext

Complement of a verb:

- (3) [...] *les puissants, de qui il avait cru pouvoir se*
the powerful.ones of who he has thought can REFL
séparer [...] (*Pense à demain, Garat, 2010*)
part
'the powerful people, from who he thought he could part'

Complement of an adjective:

- (4) [...] *un groupe de mères de qui l' inquiétude la tenait*
a group of mothers of who the concern her kept
éloignée [...] (*L'enfant des ténèbres, Garat, 2010*)
far
'mothers, from who her concern made her stay away'

- └ *De qui* in the corpus
- └ in relative clauses

Examples from Frantext

Complement of a noun:

- (5) [...] *les ogres de qui la danse barbare* [...] *vous confisque*
the ogres of who the dance barbaric you seizes
l' enfance. (Pense à demain, Garat, 2010)
the childhood

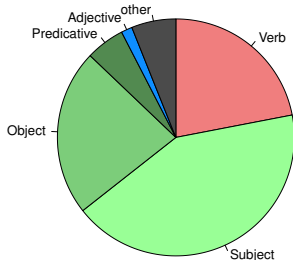
'the ogres whose barbaric dance takes your childhood away from you'

+ **Complements of prepositions**, which we exclude here from the results in order to compare with *dont* relative clauses.

- └ *De qui* in the corpus
- └ in relative clauses

Repartition

Distribution of functions of RC with *de qui* in Frantext
(pied-pipping excepted)



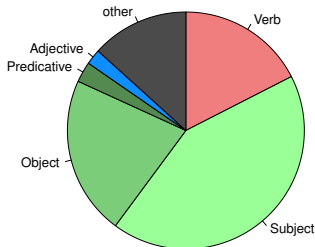
function	nb
complement of verb	29
complement of noun	93
- subject	56
- object	30
- predicative	7
complement of adjective	2
others	8
Total	132

- └ De qui in the corpus
- └ in relative clauses

Comparison with *dont*

- ▶ query [dont]: >9000 items
- ▶ we annotated 500 items (randomly)

Distribution of functions of RC with *dont* in Frantext
(subset and antecedent [+ animate])



function	nb
complement of verb	25
complement of noun	94
- subject	60
- object	30
- predicative	4
complement of adjective	3
others	19
Total	141

- └ De qui in the corpus
- └ in relative clauses



Extraction out of subject NP

- (6) [...] *la belle Antillaise dont l' effigie orna* [...]
 the nice Caribbean.girl of.which the effigy decorated
 les boîtes de Banania. (La solitude de la fleur blanche, Roux,
 the boxes of Banania
 2009)

'the nice Caribbean girl, whose picture decorated the packages of the Banania brand'

- └ *De qui* in the corpus
- └ in relative clauses



Relativizer choice (*dont* vs. *de qui*)

- ▶ No significant difference concerning the extraction out of subject NP (Fisher test, $p=.9036$)
- ▶ Exploratory analysis (generalized logistic regression models) to determine the relevant predictors among:
 - ▶ subject position (postverbal/preverbal)
 - ▶ type of verb (transitive or not)
 - ▶ definiteness of the antecedent
 - ▶ number of the antecedent
 - ▶ RC interpretation (appositive or restrictive)

The best model involve **type of verb** and **interpretation**:

- ▶ appositive RC are 2.49 times more likely to be introduced by *de qui* than *dont* ($p<.01$)
- ▶ RC with transitive verbs are 2.08 times more likely to be introduced by *de qui* than *dont* ($p<.05$)

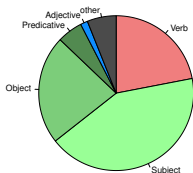
- └ *De qui* in the corpus
- └ in relative clauses

dont vs. *de qui*: recap

de qui

- ▶ only used for animate antecedent
- ▶ mostly used in pied-piping constructions
- ▶ 74% appositive
- ▶ 57% transitive verbs

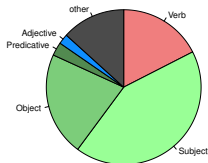
Distribution of functions of RC with *de qui* in Frantext
(pied-piping excepted)



dont

- ▶ 141/500 with animate antecedent
- ▶ only for RC and without pied-piping
- ▶ 56% appositive
- ▶ 38% transitive verbs

Distribution of functions of RC with *dont* in Frantext
(subset and antecedent [+animate])



- └ *De qui* in the corpus
- └ in wh-questions

Repartition of *de qui* among interrogatives

Among 129 occurrences:

direct questions	58
indirect questions	48
in situ (no extraction)	23

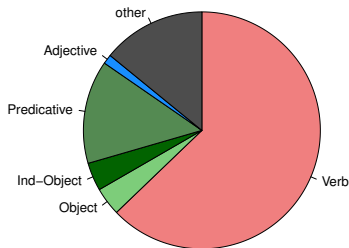
For the results:

- ▶ only direct / indirect questions
- ▶ 28 verbless questions excluded

- └ De qui in the corpus
- └ in wh-questions

de qui among wh-questions

Distribution of functions of interrogatives with de qui in Frantext

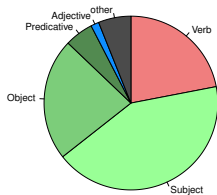


function	nb
complement of verb	49
complement of noun	17
- dir. object	3
- ind. object	3
- attribute	11
complement of adjective	1
others	11
Total	78

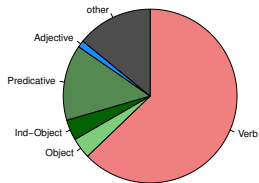
- └ *De qui* in the corpus
- └ in wh-questions

Comparison with questions

Distribution of functions of RC with *de qui* in Frantext
(pied-piping excepted)



Distribution of functions of interrogatives
with *de qui* in Frantext



- └ *De qui* in the corpus
- └ in wh-questions

Back to our previsions

Following Tellier 1991:

- ✗ no (or marginal amount of) extractions out of subject, both in relative clauses and in wh-questions

Following Chomsky 2008:

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Our Hypothesis:

- ✓ constraint on extraction out of subjects for interrogatives, but not for relative clauses
- ✓ similar pattern for *dont* and for *de qui* relative clauses

- └ Experiments on *de qui* relative clauses
- └ with animacy mismatch



Experiment 1

- ▶ extraction with *de qui*
- ▶ Likert scale 1 to 10
- ▶ acceptability judgment task (online)
- ▶ 20 items + 42 distractors
- ▶ 4 conditions (2x2 design):
 - ▶ extraction site (subject vs. object)
 - ▶ extraction type (with vs. without extraction)

- ▶ 73 participants

- └ Experiments on *de qui* relative clauses
- └ with animacy mismatch



Material (extraction)

- (7) *J' ai reçu un individu de qui la violence inquiète les gendarmes.*
I have entertained a person of who the violence worries the policemen
'I entertained a person whose violence worries the policemen.'
- (8) *J' ai reçu un individu de qui les gendarmes craignent la violence.*
I have entertained a person of who the policemen fear the violence
'I entertained a person whose violence the policemen fear.'

Material (no extraction)

(9) *J' ai reçu un individu et sa violence inquiète les gendarmes.*
I have entertained a person and his violence worries the policemen

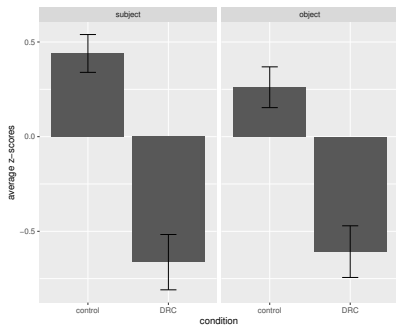
'I entertained a person and his violence worries the policemen.'

(10) *J' ai reçu un individu et les gendarmes craignent sa violence.*
I have entertained a person and the policemen fear his violence

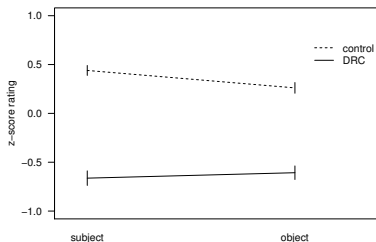
'I entertained a person and the policemen fear his violence.'

Results

- ▶ main effect of extraction type ($p < 0.001$)
- ▶ no effect of extraction site



- ▶ marginal interaction effect ($p < 0.05$)
- Effect of animacy? (Gennari & McDonald 2008)



Experiment 2

- ▶ extraction with *de qui*
- ▶ both subject and object of the relative clause are [+animate]
- ▶ Likert scale 1 to 10
- ▶ acceptability judgment task (online)
- ▶ 20 items + 45 distractors
- ▶ 4 conditions (2x2 design):
 - ▶ extraction site (subject vs. object)
 - ▶ grammaticality (relative clause vs. ungrammatical sentence)

- ▶ 49 participants

Material (relative clause)

- (11) *J' ai trouvé un jardinier de qui l' apprenti apprécie mon grand-père.*
I have found a gardner of who the apprentice appreciates my grandfather
'I found a gardner whose apprentice appreciates my grandfather.'
- (12) *J' ai trouvé un jardinier de qui mon grand-père apprécie l' apprenti.*
I have found a gardner of who my grandfather appreciates the apprentice
'I found a gardner whose apprentice my grandfather appreciates.'

- └ Experiments on *de qui* relative clauses
- └ without animacy mismatch



Material (ungrammatical)

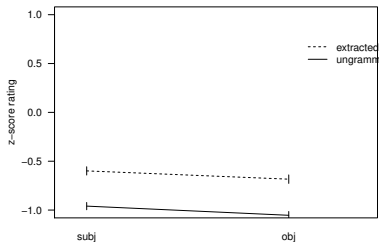
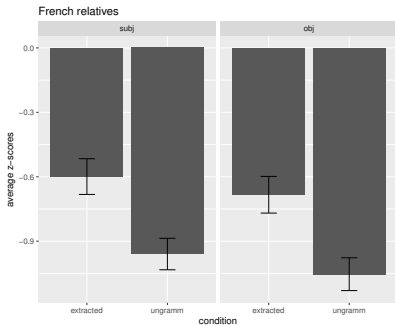
- (13) *J' ai trouvé un jardinier qui l' apprenti apprécie mon grand-père.*
I have found a gardner who the apprentice appreciates my grandfather
- (14) *J' ai trouvé un jardinier qui mon grand-père apprécie l' apprenti.*
I have found a gardner who my grandfather appreciates the apprentice

- └ Experiments on *de qui* relative clauses
- └ without animacy mismatch

Results

- ▶ main effect of grammaticality ($p < 0.001$)
- ▶ no effect of extraction site

- ▶ no interaction effect



Conclusion

- ▶ No subject island for nominal subjects
 - ▶ high frequency of subextraction from subject, both for *dont* and *de qui* in Frantext
 - ▶ extraction from subject NP is not worse than extraction from object NP
 - ▶ compatible with discourse-based approaches to islands (Erteschik-Shir 2007, Kuno 1982, Goldberg 2013, Chaves & Dery 2018)
 - ▶ back to Ross 1967: possibly a sentential subject island (but see Chaves 2012)
- ▶ (unexpected) differences between *dont* and *de qui*
 - ▶ penalty for extraction from nominals with *de qui* (better with *dont*)
 - ▶ *de qui* better with appositives
- ▶ penalty for extraction out of inanimate subject NP



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