A. A. Shumkov, A. O. Fatullaeva
St. Petersburg Electrotechnical University "LETI"

THE FUNCTIONING OF RELATIVE PRONOUNS *QUI* AND *QUE* IN FRENCH SENTENCES

The article describes the study of the main characteristics of relative pronouns qui/que and considers the actualization of their functions in the French sentence. The aim of this study is to analyze the peculiarities of qui/que pronouns functioning both as independent units and as a part of the antecedent complexes ce qui/ce que. The examples of interrogative constructions demonstrate how pronouns qui and que actualize the difference in their informativeness, which influences the degree of explicitness or inexplicitness of the subject in simple and compound sentences. The authors conclude that the relative pronoun *qui*, being the most informative, marks the presence of the inexplicit, least informative subject; *que*, being the least informative, marks the presence of the explicit, most informative subject. A comparison of the properties of qui/que units within the framework of different sentence types establishes the difference in their function. The use of qui/que in the declarative provides the possibility to use both an animate and an inanimate antecedent, while the actualization of the independent nominative function in the interrogative sentence limits the use of *qui* to an animate antecedent, *que* — to an inanimate one. This comparison proves that the opposition to the function relative pronouns perform is considered to be the most important at the present stage of the development of the French language and enables them to be either the subject (qui) or the complement (que) within a sentence. The usage of qui/que pronouns with some intensional verbs is also considered. It has been revealed that the use of the pronoun *qui* provides more options for the characterization of the subject due to the possibility of using both the indicative and subjunctive moods while the use of *que* in this context entails changes in the sentence structure and the type of the subordinate relation: the desired characteristics can be expressed only by the usage of the subjunctive mood.

Keywords: grammar, relative pronoun, Old and Middle French, diachronic changes, explicitness and non-explicitness of the subject, antecedent, intensional verb, de re et de dicto.

А. А. Шумков, А. О. Фатуллаева

ФУНКЦИОНИРОВАНИЕ ОТНОСИТЕЛЬНЫХ МЕСТОИМЕНИЙ *QUI* И *QUE* ВО ФРАНЦУЗСКОМ ПРЕДЛОЖЕНИИ

Статья посвящена исследованию основных характеристик относительных местоимений qui/que, а также рассмотрению актуализации их функций во французском предложении. Цель данного исследования — анализ особенностей функционирования местоимений qui/que как в качестве

самостоятельных единиц, так и в составе антецедентных комплексов ce qui/ce que. На примере вопросительных конструкций показано, как местоимения qui и que актуализируют разницу в своей информативности, что в свою очередь влияет на степень эксплицитности или инэксплицитности подлежащего в простых и сложных предложениях. Делается вывод, что относительное местоимение *qui*, будучи наиболее информативным, маркирует наличие инэксплицитного, наименее информативного подлежащего; *que*, будучи наименее информативным, маркирует наличие эксплицитного, наиболее информативного подлежащего. Сопоставление свойств единиц qui/que в рамках различных типов предложения позволило установить различие в их функции. Употребление qui/que в повествовании предоставляет возможность использования как одушевлённого, так и неодушевлённого антецедента, в то время как актуализация самостоятельной номинативной функции в вопросительном предложении ограничивает использование *qui* одушевлённым антецедентом, *que* — неодушевлённым. Данное сопоставление доказывает, что на современном этапе развития французского языка для относительных местоимений важнейшей является оппозиция по функции, которую они выполняют, являясь в предложении либо подлежащим (qui), либо дополнением (que). Также рассматривается употребление местоимений qui/que совместно с некоторыми интенсиональными глаголами. Выявлено, что использование местоимения *qui* предоставляет больше вариантов для характеристики подлежащего благодаря возможности использования как изъявительного, так и сослагательного наклонения, в то время как использование *que* в данном контексте влечёт изменения в структуре предложения и виде подчинительной связи, вследствие которых возможна передача характеристик, выраженных только сослагательным наклонением.

Ключевые слова: грамматика, относительное местоимение, старофранцузский и среднефранцузский языки, диахроническиие изменения, эксплицитность и инэксплицитность подлежащего, антецедент, интенсиональный глагол, de re et de dicto.

Introduction

Most of traditional grammars regard relative pronouns as elements used to introduce a relative clause [Grevisse, Goosse, 1993] while others consider them in terms of less commonly used term "conjunctive" [Bidois, Bidois, 1971]. These elements are usually placed after the nominal antecedent and at the beginning of the relative clause itself. The Russian linguist Yu. S. Stepanov refers pronouns to the grammatical category described at a specific level, that is, taking into account the nearest context in order to develop a speech chain [Stepanov, 1965].

The variability in the use of relative pronouns in modern French is a consequence of the historical changes that have taken place in the gram-

matical system [Gadet, 2003]. Although nowadays the rules for the use of relative pronouns are clearly defined and established, their choice often causes difficulties [Chartrand et al., 1999]. These difficulties are related to the structure of the relative clause, the context in which the relative pronoun is used and, therefore, the functions it fulfils.

In order to interpret the functions of the relative pronouns at the present stage of the development of the French language, we should refer to the formation of their system, which falls in the period of the Old and Middle French language. It is known that for a long period of time the rules for the use of pronouns *qui* and *que* were not clearly established, there was an inferential ambiguity in their use, and the pronoun *que* could be used freely instead of *qui*, serving as a substitute for an indefinite person or a subject. At the turn of the XVIIth and XVIIIth centuries, the pronoun *que* had no a special place in the pronoun system, being a substitute for such pronouns like *où* and *dont*. As for the pronoun *qui*, it was used, as we will see later, instead of relative pronouns such as *dont* and *lequel*. Consequently, in Classical French, the norm of relative pronouns usage was more flexible than it is today.

Thus, a historical background precedes the study which aims at identifying the functions and meanings of the pronouns *qui* and *que* both as independent words and as part of antecedent complexes *ce qui* and *ce que*, in which *ce* can make up for the absence of the antecedent and the complex itself is used to introduce indirect questions when the antecedent is searched in a direct question. The study also hypothesizes the actualization of the different informativity of *qui* and *que* pronouns, which directly affects the degree of explicitness or inexplicitness of the subject. This hypothesis was subsequently proven through the use of various examples provided by the French sentence structure itself.

It should be pointed out that interrogative and relative pronouns have much in common in their form and function and are used in three meanings: in the indefinite sense, in questions and as relative pronouns. These meanings demonstrate that the referent is subject to determination, which in indefinite use derives from the context, in interrogative constructions — from the answer to the question, and in the last case is established by connection with the antecedent.

This commonality of meanings and forms prompts some linguists to include interrogative and relative pronouns into one group [Moignet, 1974]. However, some Russian linguists believe that in modern French a distinction has been made between the forms according to the three functions indicated. For this reason, relative pronouns are regarded separately from question pronouns. The basic oppositions (autonomy of

usage, animate, syntactic function) appear differently in the interrogative and relative forms [Gak, 2000]. This point of view is also shared by Yu. S. Stepanov [Stepanov, 1965]. However, in order to examine the peculiarities of relative pronouns in more detail, the work compares them with some interrogative constructions. It is revealed that interrogative pronouns are used independently while relative pronouns are dependent on the antecedent.

Thus, a comparison of the functioning of the elements *qui* and *que* in the narrative and interrogative sentences proves that for relative pronouns, due to the impossibility of actualizing an independent nominative function, the opposition according to the syntactic function is indeed fundamental. Consequently, we will find out that despite the fact that the syntactic function of the pronouns has not been established for a long period of time, in modern French *qui* serves as a substitute for the subject and *que* — for the complement of the verb.

Methods and materials

The diachronic analysis method as well as the contextual method were applied to identify the actual functions of the pronouns within a given sentence as well as to consider the changes that have taken place in the relative pronoun system. These identified changes enabled to trace some differences in the forms and functions of relative pronouns *qui* and *que*, which were acquired or, on the contrary, lost with the development of the linguistic system, a purposive sampling of relevant examples was used to illustrate them. The interpretation and presentation of facts concerning the evolution of relative pronouns at different stages of the formation of the French language involved extensive use of the descriptive method. For demonstrating the deep structures of sentence parts, the formal logical method was used, within the frameworks of the binomiality idea [Shumkov, 2017].

The material for research is mainly represented by theoretical sources, which allow to trace the development and formation of *qui* and *que* units in the system of relative pronouns. Thus, the data of the dictionary of the French Academy (Académie Française) as well as works on the syntax and grammar of the French language were used. The structure of the French sentence at the current stage of the development of the language system serves as the material for revealing the informativeness of the *qui* and *que* elements.

Results and discussion

Overview of the historical stages of the formation of relative pronouns «qui» and« que» Relative pronoun «qui»

In Old French, the form *qui* had neither a gender nor a number distinction. As in case with demonstrative pronouns, *qui* was characterized by three case forms: *cui* expressed the dative case, *que* — the accusative and *qui* — the nominative. The conversion of the descending diphthong ûi into the ascending ūi led to the coincidence in the sounding of c(u)i and qui — *cui* began to sound like *ki* [Vasilieva, 1963].

Over the centuries, the relative pronoun *qui* has had various uses, some of which we can observe in modern French. In Old French, the pronoun *qui* is often used without an antecedent. Later on, *qui* assumes the function of a substitute for an indefinite person (1) as in modern French:

1) *Ki dunc oïst Munjoie demander,*
   De vasselage li poüst remembrer.
   (Qui les aurait alors entendu crier « Monjoie ! » pourrait se souvenir d'une belle bravoure.) [Thomasset, Ueltschi, 1993, 69].

This usage became firmly established in the XVIIth century (2):

2) *J'en sais qui ne peuvent comprendre que, qui de zéro ôte quatre, reste zéro* [Dubois, Lagan, Lerond, 1992, 408].

In the XVIIth century *qui* could also have an implied antecedent (3) or, conversely, be equivalent to celui or ceux (4):

3) *Voilà qui va bien;*
4) *J'en croiray qui vous voudrez, je m'en rapporte à qui vous voudrez* [Académie française, 1694].

Qui also had the function of summarizing the sentence preceding it, without including the pronoun *ce* (5). In modern French, this use is equivalent to *ce qui*:

5) *Il a quitté sa patrie, et l'a trahie, qui est une chose abominable* [Académie française, 1694].

In the XVIth century *qui* often takes on the function of the subject, in which it competes with the pronoun *que* [Brunot, 1967]. In the following century the system solidified, and *qui* retains the subject (6) in addition to the function of the indirect complement of the verb (7). Both of these functions will be retained thereafter:

6) *C'est une opportunité brillante pour une personne qui veut se faire remarquer;*
7) *Dîtes lui à qui il parle* [Spillebout, 1985, 156].

We should note that in the XVIth century the pronoun *lequel* and all its forms were widespread and it was used in cases where in modern language only the pronoun *qui* is acceptable [Vasilieva, 1963].

In Old French, the pronoun *qui,* preceded by a preposition, had both an animate and an inanimate referent (7–8):

8) *le lierre de qui le lieu fut couvert* [Fragonard, Kotler, 1994, 99].

From the first half of the XVIIth century onwards, grammarians were not satisfied with this referential ambiguity and began to distinguish between pronouns that would refer to people, animals or things. Nevertheless, their usage is not subject to these rules, and *qui* before a preposition referring to an inanimate object continues to be widely used in the XVIIth century, in contexts where *dont* (9) and *lequel* (10) are used in modern French [Haase, 1969, Spillebout, 1985]:

9) *Il faut dire l'esprit de qui la promptitude est plus diligente que celle des autres* [Haase, 1969, 64];
10) *Les evenements historiques à qui je suis attaché* [Spillebout, 1985, 157].

From a historical point of view, the use of the pronoun *qui* was sometimes problematic: there was a confusion between *qui* and *que* (11) as well as with qu'y (12) [Greimas, Keane, 1992], which caused false relative or additional subordinations:

11) *Rendre a chascun ce qu'il luy appartient* [Brunot, 1966a, 418];
12) *Et qui a il? Et qu'y a-t-il?* [Greimas, Keane, 1992, 519].

Among the other reasons, this confusion was caused by the possibility of eliminating *e* or *i* before vowels which subsequently makes pronouns indistinguishable [Greimas, Keane, 1992].

This problem was commonly spread from the XVIth to the XVIIIth century: the graphic fluctuation between the two forms persisted into the XVIIIth century, and the two homophone forms "were confused in the oral code at least until the turn of the century" [Seguin, 1972, 80–81].

In the New French period it was typical to use *qui* with a preposition, replacing an abstract noun: *Ce sont les nouvelles pour qui…* (G. Balzac) [Vasilieva, 1963, 390].

In the XVIIth century, these constructions are condemned by theorists as obsolete, but the fluctuating usage persists into the XVIIIth century.

To sum up, the rules concerning pronouns that begin to take hold in the XVIIth and XVIIIth centuries undergo some changes, but the evidence shows that they are not fully observed, especially those involving references to animate persons or things. In modern French, the conditions for the use of the pronoun *qui* are clearly established, as we will see later.

Relative pronoun «que»

In Old French the pronoun *que* already fulfilled all the functions that exist in modern French. Until the XVIth century it also performed the function of the subject of the verb (13) [Haase, 1969]. This use has become archaic since the early XVIIth century [Spillebout, 1985], but is preserved in lexicalised combinations (14):

13) *Car en icelle bien aultre goust trouverez et doctrine plus absconce que vous revelera de tresaultz sacremens et mysteres horrificques tant en ce que concerne nostre religion que aussi l'estat politicq et oeconomicque;*

14) *a. advienne que pourra*
    b. vaille que vaille [Fragonard, Kotler, 1994, 98-99].

Let us note that in the Old French period relative pronouns differed according to their case form. However, the functions of the dative and accusative cases were mixed. Thus, *cui* is often used instead of *que*: *ou est mes sires, cui je doi tant amer* [Sergievsky, 2019].

Since the beginning of the XVIIth century, *que* has only had the functions of a subject attribute (15) or a direct complement (16), which have existed until the modern French period:

15) *Il ne peut me lasser, indifférent qu'il est* [Dubois, Lagan, Lerond, 1992, 407];

16) *Je le plains d'avoir écouté de belles choses qu'il n'a point faites* [Spillebout, 1985, 158].

In Old French the pronoun *que* may precede a sentence or part of a sentence without using the demonstrative pronoun *ce,* as in the case with the pronoun *qui*. In the XVIIth century, this construction occurs less frequently and is only used "in the syntagmas *que je crois, que je pense* ", etc. [Haase, 1969, 67–68; Spillebout, 1985, 159]. By the end of the century the present construction *que* preceded by *ce* was generally accepted.

In the XVIIth century it is also possible that *que* has an implied antecedent when used in an indirect question (17) or in constructions with *que c'est* (18) [Vaugelas, 1934].

17) *Vous savez assez que je desire* [Maupas, 1973 [1618], 74];

18) *Il n'y a point de loy qui nous apprenne que c'est que l'ingratitude pour qui nous apprenne ce que c'est que* [Vaugelas, 1934, 173].

As in modern French, in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, *que* could be used with animate and inanimate antecedents [Académie française, 1762].

From a historical point of view, the French norm allows more variation in the contexts in which the pronoun *que* is used than in modern French. Since the Middle French period, the pronoun *que* has been used and accepted in contexts where modern French requires other relative pronouns [Brunot, 1967]. The relative and interrogative forms *qui* and *que* begin to mix with each other, although *qui* in the XVth century is more commonly used instead of *que*: *je vous diray qui bon me semble*. In turn, *que* becomes a more generalised form, replacing the former forms *qui* and *cui*, serving to express the relation itself without distinction of number or case [Sergievsky, 2019].

In the XVIIth century *que* already fulfilled the function of 'passe-partout' and 'had complete referential freedom' [Fournier, 1998, 7]. The pronoun is used, for example, to denote place with temporal (19) and spatial (20) meanings [Spillebout, 1985]. In this respect, already in Old French "que is often associated with an antecedent such as tens (time), jor, hore" (21) [Thomasset, Ueltschi, 1993, 69]. This temporal usage was spread in the XVIIth [Brunot, 1966b] and XVIIIth centuries [Académie française, 1762]:

19) *L'hiver qu'il fit si froid* [Académie française, 1694];

20) *C'est là qu'il demeure* [Académie française, 1762];

21) *Cels tens que* [Thomasset, Ueltschi, 1993, 69].

The pronoun *que* is also used instead of *dont* (22) [Brunot, 1967], in pair with *avec lequel* (23) and *auquel*. In this context it even competes with *où dont* in the first half of the XVIIth century. Despite this, *que* retained its status as the most common pronoun in the XVIth and XVIIth centuries:

22) *Me voyoit-il de l'œil qu'il me voit aujourd'hui* [Brunot, 1966b, 1653];

23) *L'encre qu'on escrit* [Greimas, Keane, 1992, 517].

The Russian philologist M. V. Sergievsky also notes the substitution of *que* instead of *dont*: *la femme que son mari est mort hier* [Sergievsky, 2019, 242].

In the XVIIIth century *que* continued to be widely used to replace *où* and *dont* and was even attested for *lequel,* which was preceded by a prepo-

sition, even though constructions with *où* and *dont* became more common by the end of the century [Brunot, 1966b]. Although the pronoun *que* usually replaced other relative pronouns, it in turn also lends itself to be replaced. In fact, *dont, où* or other relative pronouns preceded by a preposition are often used instead of *que,* especially in sentences beginning with *c'est* (24) — amplification [Haase, 1969]:

24) *C'est à la cour où l'on en use le moins* [Haase, 1969, 72].

In the XVIIth century, only the pleonastic form (25), which is still present in modern French, was condemned:

25) *C'est À Toi, mon Esprit, À Qui je veux parler* [Grevisse, Goosse, 2008, 576].

Thus, we can conclude that some of the functions of the relative pronoun *que* have been preserved in modern French, but the norm of their use was more flexible than today.

«Qui» and «que» and their informative expression in a sentence

In modern grammars relative pronouns *qui* and *que* are regarded as independent words or as part of the antecedent complexes *ce qui* and *ce que.* Essentially, *ce* in these complexes makes up for the absence of the antecedent:

Ce qui me plaît, c'est sa voix.
Montre-moi tout ce que tu as apporté !
Tu fais chaque fois ce qu'elle veut !
Nous n'avons pas vu ce qui se trouvait dans la boite.
Il te plaira ce que je vais te dire.

In addition, antecedent complexes are used while introducing indirect questions when the antecedent is searched in a direct question:

Que fait-tu là ? — Il me demande ce que je fais ici.
Qu'est-ce que ta mère cuisine ? — Elle lui demande ce que sa mère cuisine.
Qu'est-ce qui est sur la table ? — Il veut savoir ce qui est sur la table.

Generally speaking, in dependent sentences, when there is an antecedent in the independent sentence, it is quite common to use the so-called inexplicit subject, effectively reserving a syntactic position for the antecedent:

C'est un livre qui m'intéresse particulièrement.
Il veut savoir ce qui est sur la table.

It is characteristic of modern French that in this case the sentences are linked by means of the element *qui*. There are probably some special properties that allow the element *qui* to mark the presence of an inexplicit reserved subject in the dependent sentence. However, in an independent sentence with an inexplicit searched subject, the element *qui* serves as the same marker:

Qui voit Pierre?

This sentence has a single meaning, "Who sees Pierre?" but not "Who does Pierre see?"; such a meaning can only be expressed by a compound inversion:

Qui voit-il, Pierre? or Pierre, qui voit-il? or Qui Pierre voit-il?

Note that the element *que*, on the other hand, marks the presence of an explicit subject, and the sentence "Que voit Pierre?" has the singular meaning "What does Pierre see?" but not "What sees Pierre?"; this meaning can only be expressed with the element *qu'est ce qui*:

Qu'est ce qui voit Pierre?

Generally speaking, the presence of the compound inversion in independent interrogative sentences in modern French may make us suggest that this inversion is absolutely mandatory. It is possible that all subjects in a direct question undergo a split stage, changing from simple to compound (compound pronoun subjects can then become simple again).

Let us focus on the fact, that the element *qui* marks the presence of an inexplicit subject. In the direct question, the searched subject is split by the implicit pronoun ǿ:

Qui voit 'ǿ' ø Pierre? (Who sees Pierre?)
Quels livres sont 'ǿ' ø perdus? (Which books are lost?)

However, a very specific construction Quels livres sont-t-'ils' ø perdus? (Which books are lost?) emerges very rarely, in which the subject cannot be called completely inexplicit because it is split by the explicit pronoun *ils*.

Note that in the case of an interrogative element that includes a noun, the subject can only be split by implicit or explicit personal pronouns in the third person singular and plural. Already at this stage, an interesting phenomenon can be traced in relation to the degree of informativeness of the interrogative element. So, the interrogative element *qui* does not restrict the searched main substantive unit in persons and numbers, and an interrogative element like *quels livres* does not restrict it in numbers, but does

restrict it to the third person. In this tendency, we should expect the interrogative element *que* restricts the searched main substantive unit not only to the third person, but also to the singular, and that the subject will be twice explicit. Thus, we can assume the existence of the construction "Que est 'ce' ce perdu?", belonging, purely formally, to another subtype, where the searched main substantive unit is known. The twice explicit subject breaks up, and this construction is transformed into the construction "Que est 'ce' ce perdu?" and, further, into the construction "Que est 'ce' perdu?", requiring clarification by a dependent sentence, what forms the construction "Que est ce qui 'ǿ' est perdu?", where the conjunctive element *qui* predisposes the presence of an inexplicit subject in the dependent sentence. The dependent sentence can also split the subject, but only when the subject is explicit and only with the implicit pronoun ǿ; in this case the subject does not break up.

Let us note, that the implicit pronoun 'ǿ' has no relation to the Melčiuk's «zeros», which normally mark implicit subjects in impersonal sentences [Mel'čuk, 1979].

Thus, through a purely formal approach, we can explain how the interrogative element *que est ce qui* was formed in French. Indeed, due to the a priori different informativity, *qui* marks the presence of an inexplicit subject and *que* marks the presence of an explicit subject (sometimes excessively explicit and requiring the above-mentioned transformation of a simple sentence into a compound one).

The following constructions are observed in dependent sentences:

   a. *Je veux savoir qui 'ǿ' voit Pierre. (I want to know who sees Pierre.)*
   b. *Je veux savoir quels livres 'ǿ' sont perdus. (I want to know which books are lost.)*
   c. *Je veux savoir ce qui 'ǿ' est perdu. (I want to know what is lost.)*
   d. *Je veux savoir ce qui 'ǿ' voit Pierre. (I want to know what sees Pierre.)*

In the last two cases we assume that the conjunctive element *qui*, derived from the interrogative element *que*, replenishes the explicitness by means of the antecedent *ce*. The same antecedent allows the conjunctive element *que* to double the explicitness of the subject:

Je veux savoir ce que Pierre voit. (I want to know what Pierre sees.)

As noted above, in dependent sentences the explicit subject can be split by the implicit pronoun ǿ without further breakdown:

Je veux savoir ce que 'ǿ' voit Pierre. (I want to know what Pierre sees.)

It is easy to see that *qui* and *que*, alone or as part of antecedent complexes, actualize the difference in their informativeness, which in turn af-

fects the degree of explicitness (or inexplicitness) of the subject in simple and compound sentences. *Qui*, being the most informative, marks the presence of an inexplicit, least informative subject; *que*, being the least informative, marks the presence of an explicit, most informative subject.

The actualization of qui/que elements in different types of sentences and the limitations of their use

To identify the opposition in terms of the syntactic function, which is considered the main one for relative pronouns, it seems appropriate to make a comparison in the actualization of the qui/que units within the framework of the declarative and interrogative sentences.

At first sight, one might draw a comparison between the interrogative *que* in *Que mange-tu ?* and the relative *que*. Since the interrogative *que* replaces a nominal group, isn't the same true for the relative *que*? In fact, a closer look at the facts reveals an important difference between these two *que* [Tellier, Valois, 2006].

The interrogative *que* can only replace noun phrases denoting inanimate objects or concepts: it can never be used to denote animate beings. Thus, the sentence below is agrammatical:

Que comptes-tu épouser ?

The subject is searched in the question, and *que* cannot serve to express the given function of the subject, which is implied by the verb *épouser*.

The relative *que* does not possess these properties. It can be used independently of the animate or inanimate character of the antecedent:

Le meuble que Julien a dessiné s'est bien vendu.
L'homme que Katia a épousé s'appelle Victor.

We can observe the opposite situation with the relative pronoun *qui*. The relative pronoun *qui* does not have the same characteristics as the interrogative one. The interrogative *qui* has the [+animate] feature. However, *qui* in relative clauses can take either a [+animate] or an [-animate] as antecedent:

La femme qui a écrit ce livre.
Le problème qui se pose.

As we can notice, in any case the subject is replaced, whether animate or not, while the interrogative construction can only express an animate antecedent.

Let us also pay attention to the fact that nowadays, when learning French as a foreign language, the syntactic role and function played by pronouns in a sentence are also the main peculiarities highlighted by the authors of textbooks who note that the pronouns *qui* and *que* are used as the subject and direct object of a subordinate sentence, replacing nouns denoting both persons and objects [Dergunova, Perepelitsa, 2001, 245–243].

*Qu*i with a preposition can be an indirect complement in a sentence, but then it can only replace nouns denoting persons:

L'homme à qui je suis adressé est notre professeur.
L'homme de qui nous avons parlé est ici.

It's interesting to notice that in Old French, as it has been found out earlie*r, qui* with an indirect complement could replace nouns denoting inanimate objects. In Russian grammars of the French language, there is also an emphasis on interrogative constructions, which create certain restrictions on the use of the elements *que* and *que*:

Qui interrogative refers only to persons and can be:

subject:

Qui m'a demandé ?

direct complement:

Qui vois-tu ?

indirect complement:

À qui pensez-vous ? [Gak, 2000, 132].

Que interrogative refers only to objects and is a direct object in the sentence:

Que dessinez-vous ? [Dergunova, Perepelitsa, 2001, 245–246].

Therefore, we can conclude that relatives have no independent nominative function and only sustain the antecedent: independent use is an exception in this group. Interrogatives point to the object about which information is searched: they can be characterised by the independent use. Hence another important distinction follows: for the relative (in conjunctive use), the opposition of function (subject/complement) is the most important, for the interrogative — the opposition of animate/inanimate.

De dicto et de re: the role of qui and que in expression of desirable and real characteristics

Let us turn to the notion of the philosophy of language, which describes the two ways of interpreting the properties of a thing — *de re et*

de dicto. *De re* refers to the real properties of a thing, while *de dicto* conveys its desirable characteristics at the moment of a speech. Remarkably, the relative pronoun *qui*, in pair with an intensional verb (i.e. implying a subsequent description of properties or characteristics) can serve as an element that expresses both versions of the interpretation, depending on the mood that follows it. We observe this ambiguity when the nominal antecedent of the relative is the complement of an intensional verb [Tellier, Valois, 2006]. Consider the following examples:

a) *Je veux un chat qui a le poil gris;*
b) *Je veux un chat qui ait le poil gris.*

The use of the indicative in example (a) implies the existence of the thing being described, it is presented as real. The subjunctive (b), on the other hand, conveys an expression of desirable properties. In this case, we can conclude that each interpretation corresponds to a specific mode: the indicative for the interpretation of *re* and the subjunctive for the interpretation of *dicto*. However, if the verb *vouloir* is followed by *que* before the subject, the use of the two moods is agrammatical, only the subjunctive one is possible (c):

c) *Je veux qu'un chat ait le poil gris.*

As we can see, we have to change the structure to create a sentence with *que* in the subjunctive mood, while with *qui* the mood and, therefore, the verb form itself changes.

So, the relative pronoun *qui*, in fact, gives more variations in expression without any change in the sentence itself, but only by changing the mood and the speaker's intention to describe either real, or desirable and imaginary characteristics. After verbs with an intensional element, followed by *qui*, any mood can be used, whereas *que*, preceded by the subject, limits these possibilities by the structure of the sentence.

This idea is also confirmed in Russian linguistics and can be described by V. G. Gak who affirms that subjunctive does not have the independence of use that the indicative has. The subjunctive form is supported by the *que* element, which is constantly used with it [Gak, 2000].

From a grammatical point of view, it is also worth paying attention to the antecedent, which in the use of the subjunctive has only an indefinite article, since the rendering *de dicto* does not describe the thing itself, but only expresses its desirable characteristics. Thus, the presence of a definite article would indicate the existence of the thing, then there would be a transition to the category *de re* (about the thing itself, which already has real characteristics), followed by the indicative.

Conclusion

The formation of the relative pronouns qui/que covers several periods of the French language development: from the Old French to the New French period. Due to diachronic approach, we were able to establish the peculiarities of the use of pronouns at each stage of the development of the French language system. Although nowadays the rules for the use of qui/que are clearly established, there has been a confusion in their usage for a long period of time: the relative pronoun *que* could be freely used instead of *qui*. So, we can see that there was no clearly defined syntactic function. On the contrary, thanks to comparing the functions of the elements *qui* and *que* within the different types of sentences, the study has revealed that at the present stage of the development of the French language system the main characteristic of the relative pronouns implies the opposition according to the syntactic function they fulfil [Gak, 2000].

The principal novelty lies in the application of the formal logical method, within the frameworks of the binomiality idea [Shumkov, 2017], which allowed to prove the hypothesis that the relative pronoun *qui* is the most informative, marking the presence of an inexplicit, less informative subject. The relative pronoun *que*, on the other hand, being the least informative, marks the presence of an explicit, most informative subject.

The study also demonstrated that *qui* (used in pair with intensional verbs), which comes after the subject and fulfils its function in the sentence, enables to express both real and desirable characteristics The presence of *que* in such contexts, where its usage is possible, on the contrary, limits the mood to the subjunctive as *que* acquires a different function and acts as a subordinate conjunction which causes some changes in the structure of the sentence and the type of the subordinate clause.

References

Bidois, G., Bidois, R. (1971). *Syntaxe du français moderne, ses fondements historiques et psychologiques.*Vol. 2. Paris: A. J. Picard.

Brunot, F. (1966a). *Histoire de la langue française des origines à 1900. Vol. 4 (2): La langue classique (1660–1715)*. Paris: Armand Colin.

Brunot, F. (1966b). *Histoire de la langue française des origines à 1900. Vol. 6 (2): Le XVIIIe siècle*. Paris: Armand Colin.

Brunot, F. (1967). *Histoire de la langue française des origines à 1900. Vol. 2: Le XVIe siècle*. Paris: Armand Colin.

Chartrand, S.-G., Aubin, D., Blain, R., Simard, C. (1999). *Grammaire pédagogique du français d'aujourd'hui*. Boucherville: Publications Graficor.

Dergunova, M. G., Perepelitsa, A. V. (2001). *French language for secondary vocational educational institutions*. Moscow: Vysshaia shkola Publ. (In Russian)

Fournier, N. (1998). *Grammaire du français classique*. Paris: Éditions Belin.

Fragonard, M.-M., Kotler, É. (1994). *Introduction à la langue française du XVIe siècle*. Paris: Éditions Nathan.

Gadet, F. (2003). *Le grand livre de la langue française*. Paris: Éditions du Seuil.

Gak, V. G. (2000). Theoretical grammar of the French language. Moscow: Dobrosvet Publ. (In Russian)

Grevisse, M., Goosse, A. (1993). *Le bon usage: grammaire française*. Louvainla-Neuve: Éditions Duculot.

Grevisse, M., Goosse, A. (2008). *Le bon usage: grammaire française*. Bruxelles; Louvain-la-Neuve: Éditions De Boeck et Duculot.

Haase, A. (1969). *Syntaxe française du XVIIe siècle*. Paris: Librairie Delagrave.

Maupas, C. (1973). *Grammaire et syntaxe françoise*. Genève: Éditions Slatkine.

Melčuk, I. (1979). Syntactic, or Lexical Zero in Natural Language. *Proceedings of the Fifth Annual Meeting of the Berkeley Linguistic Society*, 5: 224–260. http://doi.org/10.3765/bls.v5i0.2167

Moignet, G. (1974). *Etudes de psycho-systématique française*. Paris: Éditions Klincksieck.

Seguin, J.-P. (1972). *La langue française au XVIIIe siècle*. Paris; Bruxelles; Montréal: Éditions Bordas.

Sergievsky, M. V. (2019). *History of the French language*. Moscow: Iurait Publ. (In Russian)

Shumkov, A. A. (2017). Modeling Natural Language on Physical Concepts. *Proceedings of the Sixth International. Conference on Meaning and Knowledge Representation*, 68–69. (In Russian)

Spillebout, G. (1985). *Grammaire de la langue française du XVIIe siècle*. Paris: Éditions Picard.

Stepanov, Yu. S. (1965). *Structure of the French language*. Moscow: Prosveshchenie Publ. (In Russian)

Tellier, C., Valois, D. (2006). *Constructions méconnues du français*. Montréal: Presses de l'Université de Montréal. http://doi.org/10.4000/books.pum.10250

Thomasset, C., Ueltschi, K. (1993). *Pour lire l'ancien français*. Paris: Éditions Nathan.

Vasilieva, N. M. (1963). *History of the French language*. Moscow: Innostrannyi iazyk Publ. (In Russian)

Vaugelas, C. (1934). *Remarques sur la langue françoise*. Genève: Éditions Slatkine.

Dictionaries

Dictionnaire de l'Académie française (1694). *Académie française*. Available at: https://www.dictionnaire-academie.fr/article/A1Q0018 (accessed: 30.09.2022).

Dictionnaire de l'Académie française (1762). *Académie française*. Available at: https://www.dictionnaire-academie.fr/article/A1Q0018 (accessed: 05.10.2022).

Dubois, J., Lagane, R., Lerond, A. (1992). *Dictionnaire du Français classique: le XVI-Ie siècle*. Paris: Larousse.

Greimas, A.-J., Keane, T.-M. (1992). *Dictionnaire du moyen français: la Renaissance*. Paris: Larousse.