

Passivization and pseudo-relatives with perception verbs in Spanish

Fernando Carranza

Facultad de Filosofía y Letras - Universidad de Buenos Aires; Conicet
fernandocarranza86@gmail.com

Pablo Zdrojewski

Facultad de Filosofía y Letras - Universidad de Buenos Aires
pablozd@filo.uba.ar



Received: 21-04-2023

Accepted: 04-12-2023

Published: 15-12-2023

How to cite: Carranza, Fernando & Pablo Zdrojewski. 2023. Passivization and pseudo-relatives with perception verbs in Spanish. In *Trending topics in Romance linguistics*, eds Roberta Pires de Oliveira & Cilene Rodrigues. Special issue of *Isogloss. Open Journal of Romance Linguistics* 9(4)/10, 1-29.
DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5565/rev/isogloss.353>

Abstract

Perception verbs in Spanish (e.g. *ver*, ‘to see’; *oír*, ‘to hear’) can combine simultaneously with a direct object and different kinds of clausal modifiers. One of these are pseudo-relative clauses (e.g. *que se caía*, ‘that he fell’, in *Ana vio a Juan que se caía*, literally ‘Ana saw John that he fell’, with the meaning of ‘Ana saw John falling’). If the verb combines with a pseudo-relative, its passivization is no longer possible (**Juan fue visto que se caía*, literally *John was seen that he fell*). In this paper, we contend that this pattern is due to an obviation effect. This explains not only the behavior of these verbs regarding passivization, but also the fact that reflexive and passive *se* with pseudo-relatives also leads to ungrammatical results. We conjecture that this obviation effect may be related to a defectiveness of the embedded

complementizer. We draw a possible analysis for this behavior in terms of an anti-logophoric operator in the periphery of the pseudo-relative.

Keywords: embedding, perception verbs, obviation, Spanish.

1. Introduction

Passivization may be characterized, roughly speaking, as the argument alternation where the (primary) direct object of a clause is promoted to the subject of the sentence. Although some languages, such as Latin, allow for passivization of intransitive verbs (see Postal 1986), in Spanish and many other languages, only transitive verbs allow for passivization. However, it is well known that transitivity is not enough to allow this argument alternation. For instance, verbs such as *pesar* ('to weigh'), *tener* ('to have') and *enojar* ('to make someone angry') typically reject passivization despite being transitive:

- (1) a. El bebé pesa tres kilos.
The baby weighs three kilos
b.* Tres kilos son pesados (por el bebé).
three kilos are weighed by the baby
- (2) a. Mercedes tiene el libro.
Mercedes has the book
b.* El libro es tenido (por Mercedes).
the book is had by Mercedes
- (3) a. Matías enojó a Romina.
Matías angered DOM Romina
'Matías made Romina angry'
b.* Romina fue enojada (por Matías).
Romina was angered by Matías

It is not exactly clear in the literature why these verbs behave in such a way, but, at least from a descriptive point of view, some kind of lexico-semantic restriction related to agentivity and stativity seems to be at play (Mendikoetxea 1999, RAE & ASALE 2009: §41.3).

Another ban on passivization is found in causatives:

- (4) a. Romina hizo correr a Matías.
Romina make-PST.3SG run-INF DOM Matías
'Romina made Matías run.'
b.* Matías fue hecho correr (por Romina).
Matías was make-PART run-INF by Romina

Again, it is not clear in the literature why these cases resist passivization. Supposedly, it accounts for some kind of syntactic restriction (e.g. Sheehan & Cyrino 2023, Bordelois 1974).

A third context that bans passivization, which has been understudied in the literature, is found in the domain of perception verbs in combination with pseudo-relatives:¹

- (5) a. Ana vio a Juan que caía al piso.
 Ana saw DOM Juan that fell to-the ground
 ‘Ana saw Juan falling to the ground.’
 b.* Juan fue visto (por Ana) que caía al piso.
 Juan was seen (by Ana) that fell to-the ground

This is the configuration we aim to address in this paper. We contend that this third ban on passivization is due to a subject obviation effect, analogous to the phenomenon commonly found in subjunctive complement clauses of verbs such as *querer* ‘want’, *esperar* ‘expect’. In a nutshell, the subject obviation effect is the obligatory disjoint reference between the subject of the matrix clause with the subject of the embedded clause, as in (6):

- (6) Ana_i espera que *pro*_{*i} salte.
 Ana expect that jump-PRS.SBJV.3SG
 ‘Ana expects that she/he jumps.’

In the case under study, the obviative pattern is observed in the relation between the subject of the passivized matrix verb and the salient argument of the pseudo-relative (typically the subject, but as follows from the discussion below, other arguments are also allowed under certain particular conditions). As far as we are aware, the fact that pseudo-relatives cannot be passivized has been barely observed in previous studies on the topic, except for Casalicchio & Herbeck (2022). Even more, despite it has been proposed that pseudo-relatives should be analyzed as structures involving a finite control (i.e. a controlled *pro*), to the best of our knowledge, the relation between pseudo-relatives and obviation has not been previously observed in the literature.

Different theories on obviation have been proposed. Roughly speaking, these theories rely either on syntactic factors (e.g. the binding approach, see Picallo 1985, Kempchinsky 1985), either on competition between forms (e.g. Farkas 1988, 1992, Schlenker 2005, Szabolcsi 2021, Costantini 2023). These approaches are not exclusive, but they can be combined (e.g. Kempchinsky 2009, Stegovec 2019). A consensus on the topic has not been reached and it is not our goal here to provide a final and integrated explanation of such a complex matter.² More humbly, our data intend to add pseudo-relatives as a new empirical domain to the discussion on obviation, which, as far as we can tell, has not been considered before. We argue that the obviation that pseudo-relatives display is dependent on the semantics of the matrix predicate, as it has also been observed in other configurations that trigger obviation, like directives (see Kempchinsky 1985, Suñer 1986). However, the obligatory disjoint reference between the salient argument of the pseudo-relative and the syntactic subject, regardless of its semantic nature (i.e., whether it is the logical or a derived

¹ Evidently, this list does not assume exhaustivity at all.

² For a state of the art on theories of obviation, see Costantini (2005).

subject). For this reason, it does not seem possible to describe this effect in purely semantic terms. In binding approaches on obviation, the defective character of obviative environments plays a crucial role in the explanation of the phenomenon (e.g. Picallo 1985, Raposo 1985). However, this factor has been scaled down in the more recent literature on the topic. As follows from the discussion below, pseudo-relatives also involve some kind of force and tense defectiveness. Hence, the comparison between pseudo-relatives and other configurations that trigger obviation suggests that defectiveness should be reconsidered either as a causal or a concomitant factor involved in the explanation of obviation.

The structure of the paper is organized as follows. In section 2, we review the main properties of pseudo-relatives. In 2.1, we address the restrictions on the antecedent of pseudo-relatives, whereas in 2.2 we deal with the nature of its salient argument, that is, the argument that corefers with the matrix object. In section 3, we defend an obviation-based explanation for the ban on passivization. Finally, in section 4, we speculate that this obviation effect could be related with a defectiveness of the embedded clause and we sketch a possible analysis, which appeals to an anti-logophoric operator.

2. On pseudo-relatives and perception verbs

Pseudo-relatives are finite clauses superficially similar to relative clauses. In Spanish, these have been observed to appear in plenty of contexts (for details, see Campos 1994, Brucart 1999: 428-435). However, the literature on this phenomenon in Spanish has focused predominantly in pseudo-relatives that are combined with perception verbs, either visual (7a), auditory (7b) or psychological (7c) (see, for example, Suñer 1984, Cinque 1992, Campos 1994, Rafel 2000, among many others):

- (7) a. *Vi/observé/miré* a Matías_i que *pro_i* corría. [Visual]
 saw/observed/looked DOM Matías that ran
 ‘I saw /observed/looked Matías running’
- b. *Escuché/oí* a Andrés_i que *pro_i* cantaba. [Auditory]
 listened/heard DOM Andrés that sang
 ‘I listened to/heard Andrés singing’
- c. *Imaginé/sentí/noté* a Esteban_i que *pro_i* temblaba. [Psychological]
 imagined/felt/noted DOM Esteban that shivered
 ‘I imagined/felt/noted Esteban shivering.’

It is worth noting that, as Campos (1994) observes, these visual and auditory perception verbs only admit pseudo-relatives in Spanish when they refer to a direct physical perception event, but not when used with an epistemic reading in order to indicate the beginning of a state of knowledge. This is illustrated in (8). The sentence in (8a) does not contain a pseudo-relative, and it accepts an additional causal adjunct that explains the reason the speaker has to conclude that María is back, forcing a psychological or epistemic reading. On the contrary, the sentence in (8b), which includes a pseudo-relative, does not accept this kind of adjunct.

- (8) a. Vi que María estaba de regreso (dado que su auto estaba
saw-1SG that María was of back given that her car was
en el garage).
in the garage
'I saw that Maria was back (given that her car was in the garage)'
- b. Vi a María que estaba de regreso *(dado que su auto
saw-1SG DOM María that was of back given that her car
estaba en el garage).
was in the garage
'I saw that María was back (given that her car was in the garage)'
(Campos 1994: 214)

The association of pseudo-relatives with direct perception events has been proposed for other languages as well, such as French or Italian. However, Cinque (1992: 23) observes that Italian allows for indirect readings:³

- (9) a. Se senti Gianni che fa piangere il fratellino, chiama=mi
if heard-2SG Gianni that has cry the little-brother, call=me
'If you hear that Gianni made his little brother cry, call me.'
- b. Vedere Gianni che cambia opinione così spesso non ci fa meraviglia,
see-INF Gianni that changes opinion so often not us do wonder
'To see that Gianni changes his mind so often does not surprise us.'

Such sentences are deviant in Spanish and the non-finite clause is always preferred:

- (10) a.* Si ves a Juan que está tramando algo, llama=me.
if see-2SG DOM Juan that is up-to something call=me
'If you see that Juan is up to something, call me.'
- b. Ver a Juan (*que cambia/cambiar) de opinión
see-INF DOM Juan that change-PRS.3SG/change-INF of opinion
frecuentemente es extraño.
frequently is strange
'Seeing Juan changing his mind frequently is strange.'

This suggests that specific properties of pseudo-relatives may vary across languages.

Turning again our attention to (8b), the direct object of the perception verb and the subject of the pseudo-relative share the same reference.⁴ For this reason, we will call this direct object 'the antecedent of the pseudo-relative'. In order to refer to the coreferent argument within the embedded clause, we will speak of the 'salient argument of the pseudo-relative'. This is the case because, in Spanish pseudo-relatives,

³ See Casalicchio (2013) for more discussion.

⁴ This is just a descriptive statement regarding the relation between the object of the main clause and the subject of the embedded clause. There are different mechanisms proposed in the literature for this relation. For the moment, it is the same if that relation is due to movement or binding. However, below, we will favor a binding approach.

this coreference relation is not restricted to the embedded subject, but extends to other arguments as well, as we will see in section 2.2. In the next subsections, we will address the properties that both of these arguments display.

2.1 The antecedent

Perception verbs are transitive verbs. That means that they require an internal argument, which can be a noun phrase referring to some concrete (11a) or abstract entity (12a),⁵ or a finite clause referring to some kind of propositional content or situation (13a). As expected, these verbs allow for passivization (see (11-13b)).

- (11) a. Andrés vio a Sonia.
Andrés saw DOM Sonia
'Andrés saw Sonia.'
b. Sonia fue vista por Andrés.
Sonia was seen by Andrés
- (12) a. Mercedes vio el accidente.
Mercedes saw the accident
b. El accidente fue visto por Mercedes.
the accident was seen by Mercedes
- (13) a. Ana vio que Juan caía al piso.
Ana saw that Juan fell to-the ground
'Ana saw that Juan fell to the ground.'
b. Que Juan caía al piso fue visto por Ana.
that Juan fell to-the ground was seen by Ana
'That Juan fell to the ground was seen by Ana.'

When combined with a nominal argument referring to some concrete entity, perception verbs allow for an additional subordinate clause, which can be gerundial (13a), participial (13b), infinitival (13c) or a pseudo-relative (13d)⁶.

- (13) a. Ana vio a Juan cayendo al piso. [gerundial]
Ana saw DOM Juan fall-GER to-the ground
'Ana saw Juan falling to the ground.'

⁵ Here, 'concrete entity' is used referring to individuals (humans and non-humans) and things of any sort, and 'abstract' is used primarily for events. Our use of these terms, however, is merely instrumental, and we do not commit to any particular metaphysical theory for them.

⁶ On the note of the semantic analysis for these kinds of additional subordinate clauses, Moulton & Grillo (2015) propose that pseudo-relatives denote situations. In this regard, these differ from (bare) infinitives, which Higginbotham (1983) analyses as existentially quantified event descriptions. We do not commit here to any specific analysis regarding the semantic type of pseudo-relative's denotation, but we agree with Moulton & Grillo (2015) that pseudo-relatives have some kind of referential status, i.e., they do not have quantificational nature. For more details we refer to that text.

- b. Ana vio a Juan caído en el piso. [participial]
 Ana saw DOM Juan fall-PART in the ground
 ‘Ana saw that Juan had fallen to the ground.’
- c. Ana vio a Juan caer al piso. [infinitival]
 Ana saw DOM Juan fall-INF to-the ground
 ‘Ana saw Juan falling to the ground.’
- d. Ana vio a Juan que caía al piso. [pseudo-relative]
 Ana saw DOM Juan that fall-PST.3SG to-the ground
 ‘Ana saw Juan falling to the ground.’

It is worth noting that the noun phrase *a Juan* in (13) may be replaced by an accusative pronoun, as illustrated in (14).

- (14) a. Ana lo vio cayendo al piso. [gerundial]
 Ana CL.ACC saw fall-GER to-the ground
 ‘Ana saw him (Juan) falling to the ground.’
- b. Ana lo vio caído en el piso. [participial]
 Ana CL.ACC saw fall-PART in the ground
 ‘Ana saw that Juan had fallen to the ground.’
- c. Ana lo vio caer al piso. [infinitival]
 Ana CL.ACC saw fall-INF to-the ground
 ‘Ana saw him (Juan) falling to the ground.’
- d. Ana lo vio que caía al piso. [pseudo-relative]
 Ana CL.ACC saw that fell to-the ground
 ‘Ana saw him (Juan) falling to the ground.’

In addition, this nominal argument can be questioned as in (15) and clitic-left dislocated as in (16):

- (15) a. ¿A quién vio Ana cayendo al piso? [gerundial]
 DOM Juan saw Ana fall-GER to-the ground
 ‘Who did Ana see falling to the ground?’
- b. ¿A quién vio Ana caído en el piso? [participial]
 DOM who saw Ana fall-PART in the ground
 ‘Who did Ana see falling to the ground?’
- c. ¿A quién vio Ana caer al piso? [infinitival]
 DOM who saw Ana fall-INF to-the ground
 ‘Who did Ana see falling to the ground?’
- d. ¿A quién vio Ana que caía al piso? [pseudo-relative]
 DOM who saw Ana that fell to-the ground
 ‘Who did Ana see falling to the ground?’
- (16) a. A Juan, Ana lo vio cayendo al piso. [gerundial]
 DOM Juan Ana CL.ACC saw fall-GER to-the ground
 ‘Juan, Ana saw him falling to the ground.’
- b. A Juan, Ana lo vio caído en el piso. [participial]
 DOM Juan Ana CL.ACC saw fall-PART in the ground
 ‘Juan, Ana saw that he had fallen to the ground.’

- c. A Juan, Ana lo vio caer al piso. [infinitival]
 DOM Juan Ana CL.ACC saw fall-INF to-the ground
 ‘Juan, Ana saw him falling to the ground.’
- d. A Juan, Ana lo vio que caía al piso. [pseudo-relative]
 DOM Juan Ana CL.ACC saw that fell to-the ground
 ‘Juan, Ana saw him falling to the ground.’

Furthermore, this constituent can be clitic-doubled, as shown below:

- (17) a. Ana lo vio a Juan cayendo al piso. [gerundial]
 Ana CL.ACC saw DOM Juan fall-GER to-the ground
 ‘Ana saw Juan falling to the ground.’
- b. Ana lo vio a Juan caído en el piso. [participial]
 Ana CL.ACC saw DOM Juan fall-PART in the ground
 ‘Ana saw that Juan had fallen to the ground.’
- c. Ana lo vio a Juan caer al piso. [infinitival]
 Ana CL.ACC saw DOM Juan fall-INF to-the ground
 ‘Ana saw Juan falling to the ground.’
- d. Ana lo vio a Juan que caía al piso. [pseudo-relative]
 Ana CL.ACC saw DOM Juan that fell to-the ground
 ‘Ana saw Juan falling to the ground.’

These data show that in all these cases the argument behaves as the direct object, not only regarding A'-dependencies, exemplified with interrogative and clitic-left dislocation in (15) and (16), but also regarding A-dependencies illustrated with clitic-doubling structures in (17) (see Di Tullio et al., 2019, for evidence that Spanish clitic doubling involves A-movement). Therefore, it is expected that passivization is allowed for these configurations. It is intriguing, however, that the only structures that don't match this prediction are the cases with pseudo-relative clauses.⁷

- (18) a. Juan fue visto cayendo al piso. [gerundial]
 Juan was seen fall-GER to-the ground
 ‘Juan was seen falling to the ground.’
- b. Juan fue visto caído en el piso. [participial]
 Juan was seen fall-PART in the ground.
 ‘Juan was seen fallen to the ground.’
- c. Juan fue visto caer al piso. [infinitival]
 Juan was seen fall-INF to-the ground
 ‘Juan was seen falling to the ground.’
- d.* Juan fue visto que caía al piso. [pseudo-relative]
 Juan was seen that fell to-the ground

⁷ Contrary to what we say here, Di Tullio (1998) and Castillo Ros (2017), among others, judge passivization with infinitival clauses ungrammatical (**Juan fue visto pintar un cuadro*). However, to our ears, that restriction seems to apply only when the subordinate verbs are transitive or, to a lesser degree, unergative (e.g. ?*Juan fue visto correr en el parque*). With unaccusative verbs, as in (18c), the sentence is grammatical. We leave this issue for future investigation.

2.2 On the salient argument of the pseudo-relative

As aforementioned, the direct object of the matrix clause works as the antecedent for the salient argument of the pseudo-relatives. Typically, the salient argument of the pseudo-relative is its subject (19):

- (19) Vi a Juan_i que pro_i venía para acá.
 saw-1SG DOM Juan that came-3SG to here
 ‘I saw Juan coming here.’

However, Campos (1994) and Aldama García (2018) observe that in Spanish it is also possible for the antecedent to corefer with the embedded direct (20a) or indirect object (20b):

- (20) a. Vi a Juan_i que lo_i golpeaban sin piedad.
 saw-1SG DOM Juan that CL.ACC beat-pst.3pl without mercy
 ‘I saw Juan being beaten without mercy.’
 b. Vi a Juan_i que le_i pegaron sin piedad.
 saw-1SG DOM Juan that CL.DAT beat without mercy
 ‘I saw Juan being beaten without mercy.’

In purely descriptive terms, this possibility is only available if this salient argument is not linearly preceded by a more prominent referential argument in the Keenan-Comrie accessibility hierarchy scale (Keenan & Comrie 1977).

- (21) Accessibility Hierarchy
 Subject > Direct Object > Indirect Object > Oblique > Genitive > OComp

For instance, if the salient argument is a direct object, it is necessary that no referential subject precedes it (compare (20a) with (22a)). Alternatively, if the salient argument is the indirect object, it is necessary that neither a subject nor a direct object precedes it (compare (20b) with (22b) and (22c)).

- (22) a.* Vi a Juan que [la policía]_{SU} lo_{DO} golpeaba sin piedad.
 saw-1SG DOM Juan that the police CL.ACC beat without mercy
 b.* Vi a Juan que [la policía]_{SU} le_{IO} pegaba sin piedad.
 saw-1SG DOM Juan that the police CL.DAT beat without mercy
 c.* Vi a Juan que [un paquete]_{DO} le_{IO} entregaron.
 saw-1SG DOM Juan that a package CL.DAT delivered

It is worth noting that if the argument that is more prominent in the Keenan-Comrie hierarchy appears after the salient argument of the pseudo-relative, coreference between the latter and the antecedent of the pseudo-relative is allowed, as can be seen in (23).

- (23) a. Vi a Juan que lo_{DO} golpeaba sin piedad [la policía]_{SU}.
 saw-1SG DOM Juan that CL.ACC beat without mercy the police
 ‘I saw the police beating Juan without mercy.’

- b. Vi a Juan que le_{IO} pegaba sin piedad [la policía]_{SU}.
saw-1SG DOM Juan that CL.DAT beat without mercy the police
'I saw that the police beat Juan without mercy.'
- c. Vi a Juan que le_{IO} daba [un premio]_{DO} [el jurado]_{SU}.
saw-1SG DOM Juan that CL.DAT gave a prize the jury
'I saw that the jury gave a prize to Juan.'

The reasons for these restrictions are not evident. If a finite-raising analysis for pseudo-relatives is assumed (see, for instance, Casalicchio & Herbeck 2022), this pattern may be explained in terms of an intervention effect. However, we present below some empirical evidence that challenges a raising analysis. For this reason, we exclude this as a possible explanation for the contrast in (22) and (23). Alternatively, it is possible to consider that the embedded T head lacks an EPP feature that creates a specifier in that position. Such a restriction could be seen as well in the domain of absolute clauses in Spanish:

- (24) a. i. Al salir [Juan]_{SU}, los estudiantes se sentaron. [infinitival]
to-the leave-INF Juan the students SE sat-down
'When Juan left, the students sat-down.'
- ii.* Al [Juan]_{SU} salir, los estudiantes se sentaron.
to-the Juan leave-INF the students SE sat-down
- b. i. Entrando [Juan]_{SU} a la casa, los perros se sentaron. [gerundial]
enter-GER Juan to the house, the perros SE sat-down
'While Juan was entering the house, the dogs sat down.'
- ii.* [Juan]_{SU} entrando a la casa, los perros se sentaron.
Juan enter-GER to the house, the dogs SE sat-down
- c. i. Cansado [Juan]_{SU} de trabajar, *pro* se sentó. [participial]
tire-PART Juan of work-INF SE sat-down.
'As Juan was tired of working, he sat down.'
- ii.* [Juan] cansado de trabajar, *pro* se sentó.
Juan tire-PART of work SE sat-down

These facts are consistent with Camachos's (2011) observation about the relation between the null subjects of pseudo-relatives and the null subjects of absolute clauses. As we discuss below, this lack of EPP is consistent with the fact that despite pseudo-relatives being finite clauses, they are defective with respect to tense and illocutionary force.

3. Obviation

In this section, we contend that the impossibility of passivizing the antecedent of a pseudo-relative is related to an obviation effect, that is, the obligatory disjoint reference between the salient argument of the pseudo-relative and the matrix subject. In subsection 3.1, we present evidence that supports this thesis. In subsection 3.2, we address other environments that trigger obviation effects with the purpose of reaching some generalizations regarding the underlying factors involved in the empirical domain studied in this paper.

3.1 Pseudo-relatives and obviation

The ban on antecedents of pseudo-relatives does not restrict to the passive, but it extends to other valence change operations such as reflexivization and passive *se*:⁸

- (25) a.* Juan *se ve* (a *sí mismo*) *que lee un libro*.
 Juan SE see-3SG (to himself) that read a book
 b.* *Se ven* (unos) *abogados que protestan en el juzgado*.
 SE see-3SG some lawyers that protested in the court

This behavior is found not only when the salient argument of the pseudo-relative is the subject, but also when it is the object:

- (26) a.* Juan *fue visto que lo golpearon*.
 Juan was seen that CL.ACC beat
 b.* Juan *se ve* (a *sí mismo*) *que lo golpean*.
 Juan SE see-3SG to himself that CL.ACC beat
 c.* *Se ven* *abogados que los golpean en el juzgado*.
 SE see-3PL lawyers that CL.ACC beat in the court

All these valence change operations (*i.e.* periphrastic passivization, passive *se*, reflexivization) share the fact that they create an environment in which the matrix subject is coreferent with the salient argument of the pseudo-relative. This is shown in (27), where the index is pretended to mark merely coreference, not syntactic identity.

- (27) a.* Juan_i *fue visto t_i que pro_i leía un libro*.
 Juan was seen that read a book

⁸ An anonymous reviewer observes that it is important to determine whether the ungrammaticality of (25b) is not due to a restriction on the compatibility of pseudo-relatives with indefinite antecedents. In order to address that observation, consider the examples below:

- (i) a. A: Pedro *vio* [a (unos) *pacientes que protestaban en el hospital*].
 Pedro saw [DOM (some) patients that protested in the hospital]
 B: Yo *también vi eso*.
 I also saw that.
 b. A: Pedro *conoció a unos pacientes que protestaban en el hospital*.
 Pedro knew [DOM (some) patients that protested in the hospital]
 B: *Yo *también conocí eso*.
 I also knew that

These examples show a difference in the status of the structure *a (unos) pacientes que protestan en el hospital*. In (ia), this structure must be interpreted as a pseudo-relative. In fact, the pronoun *eso* refers to the event expressed in that proposition. Notice, in turn, that this structure must be interpreted as a noun phrase modified by relative clause in (ib), given that these structures are incompatible with the pronoun *eso*, which is unable to act as an anaphor for individuals. Now, to the extent that (ia) is grammatical, it is possible to conclude that pseudo-relatives are compatible with indefinites.

- b.* Juan_i se_i vio (a sí mismo)_i que pro_i leía un libro.⁹
 Juan SE was (himself) that read a book
 c.* Se vieron abogados_i que pro_i protestaban en el juzgado.
 SE see-3PL lawyers that protested in the court

In contrast, another similar valence change operation, the impersonal *se*, leads to a grammatical or at least not fully ungrammatical result.

- (28) a.? Se vio a Juan_i que pro_i leía un libro.
 SE saw DOM Juan that read a book
 ‘It was seen that Juan read a book.’
 b.? Se vio a Juan_i que pro lo_i golpearon.
 SE saw DOM Juan that CL.ACC beat
 ‘It was seen that they beat Juan’

These sentences even improve in the present tense:

- (29) a. (A lo lejos) se ve a Juan que lee un libro.
 from the distance SE see DOM Juan that reads a book
 ‘From the distance, Juan is seen reading a book.’
 b. (Desde acá), se ve a Juan que lo golpean sin piedad.
 from here SE see DOM Juan that CL.ACC beat without mercy.
 ‘From here, it is seen that Juan is beaten without mercy.’

Crucially, despite the similarity of impersonal *se*, on the one hand, and passive *se* and reflexives, on the other, impersonal *se* does not give rise to a configuration where the salient argument of the pseudo-relative corefers with the matrix subject. These sentences lack a subject and retain the direct object position.¹⁰ Another important difference between (27) and (28)-(29) is that the matrix tense head in (27) expresses the Phi features of the antecedent of the pseudo-relative. In section 4, we conjecture that the obviation effect is triggered by an anti-logophoric reading of the salient argument of the pseudo-relative and we speculate that the factor involved in this reading is the agreement relation between the matrix T head and the antecedent of the PR.

The dissociation presented so far between periphrastic passives, passive *se* and reflexives on one hand and impersonal *se* on the other hand suggests that obviation, that is, an obligatory disjoint reference with the matrix subject, is the property that explains why perception verbs do not allow passivization when combined with pseudo-relatives.

⁹ The judgment of this sentence improves in a non-direct perception reading or a fictional reading, so (27b) is grammatical under the interpretation according to which Juan saw himself in a dream reading a book.

¹⁰ According to Pujalte & Saab (2012) and subsequent work, these *se* constructions (passive *se*, reflexive and impersonal *se*) are in essence of the same nature: they all lack an external argument. Given that there is no syntactic subject in that analysis, such an approach would be difficult to conciliate with our generalization that all these cases involve an obviation effect, interpreted as disjoint reference between the salient argument of the pseudo-relative and the matrix subject.

An anonymous reviewer contends that the ungrammaticality of (26b) is due not to an obviation effect, but to the alleged impossibility of imagining a context in which Juan sees himself in the act of doing something. However, the same effect as in (26b) occurs with the verb *escuchar* ('to listen'), with which it is not impossible to imagine such kinds of context of *Juan* listening himself.

- (30) a.* Juan fue escuchado que insultaba a Pedro.
 Juan was listened that insulted DOM Pedro.
 b.?? Juan se escucha (a sí mismo) que insulta a Pedro.
 Juan SE listen to himself that insults DOM Pedro.

Be that as it may, the reviewer also claims that even if it were possible to imagine such a context (e.g. Juan taking a look at himself in front of a mirror), there are probably aspectual reasons to prefer an infinitive or gerund, which yield, in contrast, a grammatical result:

- (32) a. ? Juan se ve (a sí mismo) leer un libro.
 Juan SE see (to himself) read.INF a book
 b. Juan se ve (a sí mismo) leyendo un libro.
 Juan SE see (to himself) read.GER a book

We agree with the reviewer in this respect. However, that preference is, in fact, what we would expect under a competition analysis of obviation effects, such as Bouchard (1982) and Farkas (1992), among others. In plain words, the ungrammaticality of (26b) could be a consequence of the infinitive or gerund clauses winning the competition against the pseudo-relative. If that analysis is on the right track, the employment of a finite clause in this context could be what triggers the disjoint reference, because, in Farkas' (1992) terms, it is blocked by the infinitive or the gerund clause. The contrast in (18) above, where finite pseudo-relative patterns out with respect to all non-finite clauses, suggest a similarity of the pattern typically addressed in competition theories of obviation, that is, the contrast between finite subjunctive clauses on one hand and non-finite clauses on the other. This similarity gives additional support to the possibility of interpreting pseudo-relatives patterns as obviation.

An anonymous reviewer also notes that Italian pseudo-relatives are not incompatible with passivization, but (27b) is totally ungrammatical. Unfortunately, we don't have, for the moment, any plausible explanation for the compatibility of pseudo-relatives with the passive voice in Italian, nor for such a dissociation between reflexives and passives in this realm. In any case, Spanish pseudo-relatives differ from Italian pseudo-relatives in other respects on top on the difference of passivization, such as the incompatibility with indirect epistemic access to the embedded clause (see the discussion with regard to examples (8)-(10)) and the compatibility with object gap pseudo-relatives (see section 2.2). It is not clear for us which underlying factors explain these differences.

Another data that reinforce the idea that obviation is involved in the cases discussed so far are configurations where both the matrix verb and the pseudo-relative display arbitrary pronouns, such as the following:

- (33) a. *pro_{arb}* se vio que *pro_{arb}* robaban.
pro_{arb} SE saw that *pro_{arb}* steal.
 ‘Someone was seen stealing.’
 b. *pro_{arb}* fue visto que *pro_{arb}* robaban.
pro_{arb} was seen that *pro_{arb}* steal.
 ‘Someone was seen stealing.’
- (34) a. *pro_{arb}* se vio que *pro_{arb}* se castigó a los culpables.
pro_{arb} SE saw that *pro_{arb}* SE punished DOM the culprits
 ‘It was seen that the culprits were punished.’
 b. *pro_{arb}* fue visto que *pro_{arb}* se castigó a los culpables.
pro_{arb} was seen that *pro_{arb}* SE punished DOM the culprits
 ‘It was seen that the culprits were punished.’

All these cases involve some sort of arbitrary logical subject. For the present discussion here, it is not relevant whether that *pro* is syntactically present or not. It is also not relevant whether passives introduce existential quantification, as it is often assumed, or whether they introduce a pronoun, such as in Baker et al. (1988). For the sake of the argument, it is enough to assume that some variable has to be valued through an assignment function at the point where the truth value of the proposition is evaluated (e.g. for a formula $\exists x[P(x)]$, every relevant member in the domain of entities must replace x in such a manner that it is enough for at least one entity to make the proposition $P(x)$ true, in order to make true the entire proposition $\exists x[P(x)]$). At that point, it is to be observed that the sentences in (33-34) are only admitted as far as the arbitrary individuals that perform the action expressed by the matrix verbs and the arbitrary individuals that perform the action expressed by the embedded clause are distinct. That is, in (33), those who see have to be different from those who steal and in (34), those who see have to be different from those who punished the culprits.

3.2 Other obviation environments

Literature on obviation in Spanish has focused primarily on subjunctive clauses in contexts of control verbs (Picallo 1985, Costantini 2009). For instance, (32) illustrates an obligatory subject control verb compatible with a subjunctive clause. In (35a), the subject of the embedded non-finite clause must be coreferential to the subject of the main clause. In (35b), in contrast, it can be seen that if the embedded clause is a finite subjunctive clause, the null subject has a mandatory disjoint reference with the matrix subject.

- (35) a. Pedro_i quiere PRO_{i/*k} leer un libro.
 Pedro wants read-INF a book
 ‘Pedro wants to read a book.’
 b. Pedro_i quiere que *pro*_{*i/k} lea un libro.
 Pedro wants that read-SBJV a book
 ‘Pedro wants that she/he read a book.’

This kind of contrast has inspired the competition approach, where obviation emerges as the result of a sort of competition between subjunctive and infinitive forms

in particular contexts (e.g. Bouchard 1982, 1983, Farkas 1992, Schlenker 2005, Constantini 2023, among others).

In turn, obligatory object control verbs trigger mandatory coreference between the object and the embedded subject, regardless of the finite or non-finite status of the embedded clause, as illustrated in (36).

- (36) a. Pedro_i forzó a Juan_k a PRO_{*i/k} leer un libro.
 Pedro forced DOM Juan to read-INF a book
 ‘Pedro forced Juan to read a book.’
 b. Pedro_i forzó a Juan_k a que *pro*_{*i/k} lea un libro.
 Pedro forced DOM Juan to that read-SBJV a book
 ‘Pedro forced Juan to read a book.’

However, finite and non-finite clauses for these object control verbs behave differently as regards obviation, as was observed by Kempchinsky (2009: 1791). Consider the following contrast:

- (37) a. Pedro_i se_i forzó (a sí mismo)_i a PRO_i leer un libro.
 Pedro SE forced (himself) to read-INF a book
 ‘Pedro forced himself to read a book.’
 b.* Pedro_i se_i forzó (a sí mismo)_i a que *pro*_i lea un libro.
 Pedro SE forced (himself) to that read-SBJV a book.

On the one hand, the non-finite clause only requires the embedded null subject to be coreferent with the matrix object, but imposes no restriction on the possibility of both embedded subject and matrix object to corefer with the matrix subject –i.e., a reflexive reading–. For this reason, both (36a) and (37a) lead to grammatical results. On the other hand, the subjunctive clause requires, as well, a mandatory coreference between the embedded subject and the matrix object, but also adds a mandatory disjoint reference with the subject of the main clause. For this reason, (36b) leads to a grammatical result, but (37b), where there is a reflexive pronoun (that is, the matrix object corefers with the matrix subject), does not.

Table 1 summarizes a preliminary list of control verbs that triggers subjunctive mood when combined with a finite clause.

Table 1: Preliminary list of Spanish subject and object control verbs compatible with subjunctive clauses

Subject control verbs	Object control verbs
<p>acordarse de ('remember'), acostumbrarse a ('get used to'), animarse a ('dare'), decidir ('decide'), dedicarse a, desear ('wish'), evitar ('avoid'), pretender ('pretend'), querer ('want'), necesitar ('need'), negar ('deny'), negarse a ('deny'), olvidar ('forget'), olvidarse de ('forget'), suplicar ('beg')</p>	<p><i>direct object control verbs (reflexive):</i></p> <p>animar a ('encourage'), decidir a ('decide'), forzar a ('force'), ilusionar con ('excite'), instar a ('encourage'),</p> <p><i>indirect object control verbs (with non-finite clause as subject):</i></p> <p>agradar ('like'), alucinar ('hallucinate'), apetecer ('like'), gustar ('like'), encantar ('love'), ilusionar ('get somebody's hopes up'),</p> <p><i>indirect object control verbs (with an independent subject):</i> ordenar ('order'), permitir ('allow'), prohibir ('forbid'), recomendar ('recommend')</p>

This list includes desiderative, directive and psychological verbs but excludes, for instance, propositional attitude verbs, which do not combine with subjunctive clauses in Spanish.¹¹ The same happens for subject control verbs such as *abstenerse de* ('refrain'), *atreverse a* ('dare') and *dignarse a* ('deign'), which lexically select a complement clause whose action has to be controlled by the matrix agent. Therefore, these verbs also reject subjunctive clauses, as seen in (38) with *abstenerse*:

- (38) a. Yo_i me_i abstuve de PRO_i hablar.
I myself refrained of talk-INF
'I refrained myself from talking.'
- b.* Yo_i me_i abstuve de que pro_i hablara.
I myself refrained of that talk-SBJV
'I refrained him from talking.'

Object control verbs listed in table 1 are divided into direct-object or indirect-object oriented. As expected, when these verbs combine with a subjunctive clause, they show the same restrictions as pseudo-relatives: they disallow analytic passive (39a), reflexivization (39b) and passive *se* (39c).

¹¹ Propositional attitude verbs do allow subjunctive mood in other languages, as can be seen in the following example from Italian:

- (i) Gianni pensa che *pro* parta domani.
Gianni thinks that leaves-SBJV.PRS.3SG tomorrow
'Gianni thinks he will leave tomorrow.'
(Costantini 2005: 98).

- (39) a.* Juan_i fue forzado a que *pro*_i lea un libro.
 Juan was forced to that read-SBJV a book
 b.* Juan_i se forzó (a sí mismo) a que *pro*_i lea un libro.
 Juan SE forced-3SG (himself) to that read-SBJV a book
 c.* Se forzaron abogados_i a que *pro*_i protesten en el juzgado.
 SE forced-3PL lawyers to that protest-SBJV in the court

As observed for pseudo-relatives, these verbs give rise to legitimate sentences when impersonal *se* is applied:

- (40) Se forzó a Juan_i a que *pro*_i lea un libro.
 SE forced-3SG DOM Juan to that read-SBJV a book
 ‘They forced Juan to read a book.’

Once again, this is expected, since impersonal *se* is a configuration that lacks a matrix subject (or, more precisely, a referential matrix subject).

Another context that gives rise to obviation effects are imperatives. In Spanish and many other languages, imperatives may only work as matrix sentences. In these configurations, imperatives yield an “anyone other than the speaker” interpretation, as Kempchinsky (2009) describes it.

Imperatives in embedded contexts are typologically rare, but appear in languages such as Korean, Japanese and Slovenian, among others (Stegovec 2019). In these embedded contexts, imperatives trigger obviation, that is, coreference with the matrix subject is not possible, such as can be seen in the following example for Slovenian:

- (41) * Rekel si_i, da si pomagaji.
 said-M are.2 that REFL.DAT help.IMP.(2)
 Int.: ‘You said you should help yourself.’ (Stegovec 2019, 51)

Stegovec (2019) argues for Slovenian that disjoint reference with the speaker in matrix imperatives and disjoint reference with the matrix subject in embedded subjunctive or imperative directives are due to the same obviation phenomenon. He understands this restriction as a ban on coreference between the attitude holder and the subject. Below, we explore a possible analysis according to which the mechanism behind the obviation effects studied by Stegovec is also responsible for the patterns in pseudo-relatives reported in this paper.

4. A conjecture on obviation: defectiveness on finite clauses

To this point, we have argued that the ban on passivization for perception verbs when combined with pseudo-relatives is due to an obviation effect. As far as we are aware, there is only one explanation for the ban on passivization when a perception verb combines with a pseudo-relative. It was recently proposed in an upcoming article by Casalicchio & Herbeck (2022). According to these authors, pseudo-relatives are to be explained in terms of a Raising-to-Object structure. Besides the technical implementation of this idea, a Raising-to-Object analysis for pseudo-relatives is

challenged by the structures in (42), that, to the best of our knowledge, were first observed in Saab & Zdrojewski (2021)¹²:

- (42) a. Vi a Juan y vi a Pedro que corrían en el parque.
 saw-1SG DOM Juan and saw-1SG DOM Pedro that run-3PL in the park
 ‘I saw Juan and I saw Pedro running in the park.’
 b. Vi a Juan y vi a Pedro que se golpeaban
 saw-1SG DOM Juan and saw-1SG DOM Pedro that SE beat-3PL
 mutuamente.
 mutually
 ‘I saw Juan and I saw Pedro beating each other.’

What is special about (42) is that the plural agreement marker of the embedded verb mandatorily induces a split antecedent reading of the embedded null subject. If coreference between the salient argument and the antecedent were based on movement, then there should be identity between the moved argument and the argument appearing in the landing site. However, in split antecedent configurations such as (42), there is no identity between the salient argument, which is plural, and neither *Juan* nor *Pedro*. In sum, these data seem to favor an analysis in terms of some kind of binding with an empty category flexible enough to deal with split readings, rather than a movement or raising-to-object treatment of pseudo-relatives.

We have shown above that the restriction we address in this paper is not exclusive for passivization, but extends also to passive *se* and, crucially, to the reflexive, where no A-movement is observed (at least for standard analysis of reflexivization). We have also shown that this disjoint reference extends to cases where arbitrary pronouns in broad terms are involved as well. Therefore, we conclude that the restriction is better captured as an obviation effect, that is, a mandatory disjoint reference between the salient argument of the pseudo-relative and the matrix subject, rather than as a movement restriction. Although we do not have a fully-fledged explanation for this obviation effect, we conjecture that a clue for this behavior lies in the force and tense defectiveness that emerges when finite clauses are combined with direct perception verbs.

The tense dependence of pseudo-relatives has been observed by many authors (Campos 1994: 212, Rafel 2000: 71, Casalicchio 2013: 30-31, Casalicchio and Herbeck 2022, among others). That is, pseudo-relatives are not capable of expressing

¹² An anonymous reviewer notes some reminiscence between these data, which involve coordination of verbal phrases, and the phenomenon of multi-headed restrictive relative clauses, which involve coordination of noun phrases (these structures were named *hydras* by Link 1998):

(i) the boy and the girl who met yesterday.

(Link 1998: 77)

In (i), the meaning of the relative clause cannot be distributed over both conjuncts. We find this comparison very interesting, and the resemblance between both structures deserves further investigation. For the moment, however, it is unclear to us whether examples in (42) and Link’s *hydras* can be related; especially because *hydras* involve *bona fide* relative clauses, whereas pseudo-relatives are completive clauses (see the discussion presented in this section). We leave the study of these structures for future research.

a temporal value independent of the matrix tense (43a), as opposed to other type of embedded clauses, such as relatives (43b):

- (43) a. Vi a Juan que {leyó / leía / *lee / *leerá}
 saw-1SG DOM Juan that {read-PERF/read-IMP / read-PRES / read-FUT}
 mis cartas.
 my letters
 ‘I saw that John read my letters’
 b. Vi a la persona que {leyó / leía / lee / leerá}
 saw-1SG DOM the person that {read-PERF/read-IMP/read-PRES/read-FUT}
 mis cartas.
 my letters.
 ‘I saw the person that read my letters’

Pseudo-relatives are not only tense-dependent, but they are also illocutionary force-dependent. Although the literature takes for granted that pseudo-relatives are only compatible with the declarative complementizer *que* (e.g. Moulton & Grillo 2015, Casalicchio 2012: 34-35), our claim is that these can also display the interrogative complementizer *si* (44a) or interrogative pronouns (44b):

- (44) a. ¿Viste al bebé si mojó el pañal?
 saw-1SG DOM-the baby whether wet the diaper
 ‘Have you seen whether the baby wet the diaper?’
 (cf. ¿Viste si el bebé mojó el pañal?)
 b. ¿Viste al ladrón cuánto robó?
 saw-2SG DOM-the thief how-much steal
 ‘Have you seen how much did the thief steal?’
 c. ¿Viste al bebé quién lo cambió?
 saw-2SG DOM-the baby who CL.ACC changed
 ‘Have you seen who dressed the baby up?’

An anonymous reviewer contends that examples in (44) are not pseudo-relatives, but presumably embedded interrogative clauses with a topic preceding the interrogative element, as proposed in Rizzi (2001: 289) for cases as the following:

- (45) a. Non so se, a Gianni, avrebbero potuto dirgli la verità
 not know-1SG if to Gianni could have tell-CL the truth
 ‘I don’t know if to Gianni, they could have said the truth’
 b. Non so, a Gianni, se avrebbero potuto dirgli la verità.
 not know-1SG to Gianni if could have tell-cl the truth
 ‘I don’t know, to Gianni, if they could have said the truth.’
 c. Mi domando se questi problemi, potremo mai
 CL.1SG wonder-1SG if these problems can-FUT.1PL never
 affrontarli
 address=them
 ‘I wonder if these problems, we will ever be able to address them’

- d. Mi domando, questi problemi, se potremo mai
 CL.1SG wonder-1SG these problems if can-FUT.1PL never
 affrontarli
 address=them
 ‘I wonder, these problems, if we will ever be able to address them.’

Structures in (45) are also possible in Spanish (46):

- (46) a. No sé si, a Juan, le pudieron decir la verdad.
 not know-1SG if to Juan CL.DAT could-3PL tell-INF the truth
 ‘I don’t know if to Gianni, they could have said the truth’
 b. No sé, a Juan, si pudieron decir=le la verdad.
 not know-1SG to Juan if could.3PL tell-INF=CL.DAT the truth
 ‘I don’t know, to Gianni, if they could have said the truth’
 c. Me pregunto si estos problemas, seremos capaces de
 CL.1SG wonder-1SG if these problems be-FUT.1PL able-PL of
 afrontar=los.
 address=CL.ACC
 ‘I wonder if these problems, we will ever be able to address them’
 d. Me pregunto, estos problemas, si seremos capaces de
 CL.1SG wonder-1SG these problems if be-FUT.1PL able-PL of
 afrontar=los.
 address=CL.ACC
 ‘I wonder, these problems, if we will ever be able to address them’
 e. Me pregunto a Juan, cuándo lo golpearon.
 CL.1SG wonder-1SG DOM Juan when CL.AC beat-3PL
 ‘I wonder Juan, when did they beat him.’

However, these structures differ from the cases under study in a series of respects. Interrogatives with preceding topics can occur with any kind of constituent:

- (47) a. No sé ayer, quién llegó tarde.
 not know-1SG yesterday who arrived-3SG late
 ‘I don’t know who arrived late yesterday.’
 b. No sé en la entrada del edificio, quiénes discutieron.
 not know-1SG in the gate of-the building who-PL argued-3PL
 ‘I don’t know who argued in the gate of the building.’

In addition, structures considered by Rizzi are cases of clitic-left dislocation within an embedded interrogative sentence. As expected, those topics present connectivity effects.

- (48) a. No sé, Juan_i, cuándo *pro*_i compró el auto.
 not know-1SG Juan when bought-3SG the car
 ‘I don’t know when did Juan buy the car.’
 b. No sé, a Juan_i, quién *lo*_i despidió.
 not know.1SG DOM Juan who CL.ACC fired.3SG
 ‘I don’t know who fired Juan.’

- c. No sé, a Juan, quién le dio un regalo.
 not know-1SG to Juan who CL.DAT gave-3SG a present
 ‘I don’t know who gave a present to Juan.’

In turn, the antecedent of the interrogative pseudo-relative and the position within the clause can bear different cases:

- (49) a. ¿(Lo) viste a Juan si *pro* rompió el vidrio?
 CL.ACC saw-1SG DOM Juan if *pro*.NOM broke-3SG the glass
 ‘Did you see if Juan broke the glass?’
 b. ¿(Lo) viste a Juan quién le dio un regalo?
 CL.ACC saw-1SG DOM Juan who CL.DAT gave a present
 ‘Did you see who gave a present to Juan?’

On top of this, the topic in sentences such as (46) cannot be pronominalized, whereas the antecedent of the pseudo-relative can.

- (50) a. *¿Lo_i sabés si *pro*_i le cambió el pañal al bebé?
 CL know-2SG if CL changed the dipper to-the baby
 b. ¿Lo viste si cambió el pañal al bebé?
 CL saw-2SG if changed the dipper to-the baby
 ‘Did you see if he changed baby’s dipper?’

Furthermore, pseudo-relative is a cover term for an empirical data, not a specific analysis. We accept reviewer’s proposal as a possible syntactic analysis for the cases in (44), but we do not share that this contradicts the possibility of regarding these sentences as truly instances of pseudo-relatives. For instance, pseudo-relatives in declarative contexts have been analyzed as completives with a topic preceding (e.g. Moulton y Grillo 2015), and this does not mean that pseudo-relatives have been misidentified. Moreover, the examples in (44) share the same distribution as pseudo-relatives as regards the kind of predicates they can combine with. As can be seen in (51-52), they are compatible with verbs as *ver* (‘to see’) or *escuchar* (‘to hear’), but not with verbs such as *oler* (‘to smell’) or *conocer* (‘to know’):

- (51) a. Juan vio/escuchó a Pedro_i que *pro*_i estornudó.
 Juan saw.3SG/heard-3SG DOM Pedro that snored
 ‘Juan saw/heard that Pedro snored’
 b. *Juan olió/conoció a Pedro_i que *pro*_i estornudó
 Juan smelled.3SG/knew-3SG DOM Pedro that snored
 (52) a. ¿Juan vio/escuchó a Pedro_i si/cómo *pro*_i estornudó?
 Juan saw.3SG/heard-3SG DOM Pedro if/how snored
 ‘Did Juan see/hear if/how Pedro snored?’
 b. *Juan olió/conoció a Pedro_i si/cómo *pro*_i estornudó?
 Juan smelled.3SG/knew-3SG DOM Pedro if/how snored

Turning back to the examples in (44), the possibility of using these alternative complementizers is not entirely free, but depends on the illocutionary force of the

matrix clause. As illustrated in (53), pseudo-relatives with the complementizer *que* are only compatible with declarative matrix sentences, whereas pseudo-relatives introduced by complementizer *si* or by an interrogative pronoun are only compatible with interrogative root sentences, as shown in (54):

- (53) a. Vio que el bebé mojaba el pañal.
saw-3SG that the baby wet the diaper
'I saw that the baby wet the diaper.'
- b. Vio al bebé que mojaba el pañal.
saw-3SG DOM-the baby that wet the diaper
'I saw the baby wetting the diaper.'
- c.* ¿Vio al bebé que mojaba el pañal?
saw-3SG DOM-the baby that wet the diaper?
'Did you see if the baby wet the diaper?'
- (54) a.* Vio si el bebé mojó el pañal.
saw-3SG whether the baby wet the diaper
- b.* Vio al bebé si mojó el pañal.
saw-3SG the baby whether wet the diaper
- c. ¿Vio al bebé si mojó el pañal?
saw-3SG DOM-the baby whether wet the diaper?

This tense and illocutionary force dependence of pseudo-relatives suggests that they are, in some way, defective.

It is worth noting that this defectiveness with perception verbs in its direct perception reading is not exclusive for pseudo-relatives, but also emerges in clausal complements:

- (55) a. Yo estoy viendo que Juan habló.
I am seeing that Juan spoke.
'I am noticing that Juan spoke.'
- b. Yo vi que Juan hablará.
I saw that Juan speak-FUT
'I notice that Juan will speak.'

Sentence (55a) can only mean that I noticed that Juan spoke. It cannot be interpreted as me having a present direct visual perception of Juan speaking in the past, unless this perception is mediated by some footage (e.g. I am seeing Juan's speech on video). Sentence (55b), again, cannot mean that I saw in the past Juan's future speech (unless, in the context of fiction, if some kind of time traveling is involved). It can only mean that I noticed that John is going to talk or that I saw, for example in an event program, the news that he is going to talk. As accommodation scenarios show (video footage for (55a) and time traveling in (55b)), this temporal restriction is of a semantic nature, it has to do with direct perception meaning.

Complement CPs for perception verbs in their direct perception interpretation are also obviative. Notice that the matrix subject in (56) cannot be coreferent with the embedded subject.

- (56) Juan_i vio que *pro*_{k/*i} golpeaba a Pedro.
 Juan saw that hit DOM Pedro
 ‘Juan saw that he hit Pedro.’

This suggests that this defectiveness and obviation effect may be, properly speaking, not inherent to pseudo-relatives (which, as said above, may appear also in other context besides perception verbs), but they seem to be a more general property of finite clauses combining with direct perception verbs, which is presumably imposed by its semantics. In fact, under an indirect access reading the coreference between the matrix subject and embedded subject is possible, for instance, if Juan is seeing himself in a footage or a mirror hitting Pedro and he is not aware that the hitter is himself.

On the note of subjunctive finite clauses in control verb environments, it is worth mentioning that the subjunctive mood has been traditionally analyzed as a defective mood. In Spanish, it was observed in the literature that this environment is subject to the so-called *consecutio temporum*, that is, a series of conditions that restrict which subjunctive tense may appear according to the tense of the main clause (see Gili Gaya 1961: 175-176; Carrasco Gutiérrez 1999, among many others). Even though these correlations are less rigid in modern Spanish, restrictions of this sort still survive.

Pursuing these intuitions, in the binding theory era, authors such as Picallo (1984, 1985) and Kempchinsky (1986) explained obviation effects in these environments in terms of this defectiveness. According to them, the defective character of subjunctive clauses makes them extend the binding domain. This leads to the impossibility of corefering matrix and embedded subjects due to a violation of principle B from binding theory. Given the current assumptions of syntactic theory, this particular analysis, as it was formulated, is hard to maintain. However, appealing to defectiveness as the crucial factor behind obviation still seems promising to us, as the comparison with pseudo-relatives suggests.

It is worth recalling that, alternatively, authors such as Bouchard (1982) and Farkas (1992), among others, explain obviation effects in subjunctive clauses in terms of competition between a finite and a non-finite form. Although we do not aim here to defend a competition approach, it is interesting to note that pseudo-relatives are also in competition with non-finite forms. This gives some support at least to the generalization that the paradigmatic relation between finite and non-finite clauses is at play in obviation effects.

As regards the imperative, this is also a well-known case of a defective paradigm. First, imperatives in Spanish and in many other languages are only available for second-person singular and plural. Second, they do not inflect in tense, i.e., it is not possible to give an order to someone using a future imperative or a past imperative form. Again, as in the case of the direct perception verbs, this seems to be related to a functional fact: it is not possible to ask someone to do something in the past.

For these reasons, we agree with Casalicchio and Herbeck (2022) on that the defectiveness of the embedded clause is in some way responsible for the pattern with passives and pseudo-relatives, although we do not share that the way in which this defectiveness affects the pattern is related to movement.

The fact that the obviation effect observed in this paper extends to passives and reflexives shows that the disjoint reference is established in relation to the syntactic final subject, not to the logical one. This suggests that, although the semantic properties of the event expressed by the matrix clause is in some way relevant, the

mechanism by which the obviation is implemented is of a syntactic nature, rather than semantic or pragmatic. For this reason, our data favor some kind of binding approach to obviation.

In order to explain the disjoint reference of both subjunctive clauses and imperatives, Kempchinsky (2009) appeals to the presence of an anti-logophoric operator affecting the semantic binding of the embedded subject. This operator is of imperative nature in the case of imperative sentences, triggering a “anyone other than the speaker” interpretation. Embedded directives, in turn, display a quasi-imperative operator yielding an interpretation “anyone other than the matrix subject”. There is a piece of evidence that favors this hypothesis. A fact that has been unnoticed before is that the salient argument of the pseudo-relative can be an epithet, which as observed by Dubinsky & Hamilton (1998) are anti-logophoric pronouns. Consider examples in (57)¹³.

- (57) a. ?? Juan vio a Pedro caer en un pozo, el torpe.
 Juan saw DOM Pedro fell-INF in a hole the clumsy
 b. ? Juan vio a Pedro que el torpe caía en un pozo.¹⁴
 Juan saw DOM Pedro that the clumsy fall in a hole
 ‘Juan saw that the clumsy Pedro fall in a hole.’
 c. Juan vio a Pedro que caía en un pozo, el torpe.
 Juan saw DOM Pedro that fall in a hole the clumsy
 ‘Juan saw that the clumsy Pedro fall in a hole.’

Interestingly enough, the same judgments are obtained in the contrast between infinitive and subjunctive complements of object control verbs.

- (58) a. * Juan salvó a Pedro de caer en un pozo, el torpe.
 Juan save DOM Pedro of fell-INF in a hole the clumsy
 b. Juan salvó a Pedro de que el torpe cayera en un pozo.
 Juan saw DOM Pedro of that the clumsy fall-SJV in a hole
 ‘Juan saw that the clumsy Pedro fall in a hole.’
 c. Juan salvó a Pedro de que cayera en un pozo, el torpe.
 Juan saw DOM Pedro of that fall-SJV in a hole the clumsy
 ‘Juan saw that the clumsy Pedro fall in a hole.’
 (59) a. * Juan convenció a Pedro de limpiar el desagüe, el tarado.
 Juan convinced DOM Pedro of clean-INF the drain the stupid
 b. Juan convenció a Pedro de que el tarado limpiara el desagüe.
 Juan convinced DOM Pedro of that the stupid clean-SJV the drain
 ‘Juan convinced the stupid Pedro to clean the drain.’
 c. Juan convenció a Pedro de que limpiara el desagüe, el tarado.
 Juan convinced DOM Pedro of that clean-INF the drain the stupid
 ‘Juan convinced the stupid Pedro to clean the drain.’

¹³ Except for one speaker, we received consistent judgments from the native informants informally consulted in order to confirm these contrasts.

¹⁴ It seems that (57b) is not as grammatical as (57c). As we have mentioned before, it seems that the restriction with regard to preverbal subjects within pseudo-relatives observed in (24) receives further confirmation from these examples.

Crucially, passive alternatives to (547c), (58c) and (59c) are ungrammatical.

- (60) a. * Pedro fue visto que caía en un pozo, el torpe.
 Pedro was seen that fall in a hole the clumsy
 b. * Pedro fue salvado de que (el torpe) cayera en un pozo
 Pedro was saved of that the clumsy fall in a hole
 (el torpe).
 the clumsy
 c. * Pedro fue convencido de que (el tarado) limpiara el desagüe
 Pedro was convinced of that the stupid clean the drain
 (el tarado).
 the stupid

Turning back to Kempchinsky's theory, we could assume a similar anti-logophoric operator in the periphery of pseudo-relatives. The defective character of the finite clause, such as the defective character of imperatives and embedded subjunctives, allows this operator to get its value from the subject of the matrix clause via Agree, Inheritance or whatever syntactic mechanism. Defective finite clauses in the context of direct perception verbs impose a restriction according to which this operator displays a disjoint reference with the salient argument of the pseudo-relative, such as seen in the schematic structure in (61):

- (61) *Active*
 [Ext Arg_k T_k [VP V_{direct-perception} [Int Arg_i [CP_{defective} Op_k [*pro*_{i/*k} ...]]]]]

What seems to be crucial for the passive alternative is that indexing features of the internal argument expressed on T are shared by the embedded Op:

- (62) *Passive*
 * [T_k [VP V_{direct-perception} [Int Arg_k [CP_{defective} Op_k [*pro*_{i/*k} ...]]]]]

As we mentioned above, the salient argument of the pseudo-relative is not restricted to the subject position, but it could be a direct object or an indirect object. If this observation is on track, it seems that obviation effects are not restricted to the coreference with embedded subjects but also with other internal arguments.

Furthermore, direct and indirect objects may work as salient arguments as far as they are not linearly preceded by a more prominent referential argument in the Keenan-Comrie accessibility hierarchy scale. We conjectured above that this may be due to the lack of an EPP feature in the T head. This makes pseudo-relatives unable to create a specifier position. This is not unexpected if pseudo-relatives are defective with respect to tense and illocutionary force.

Then, if our conjecture is on the right track, the defective character of imperatives, subjunctives and pseudo-relatives is the crucial fact that explains why all these cases show obviation effects. It is worth mentioning that the importance of the relation between defectiveness and obviation in subjunctives has been undermined in some recent theories of obviation (e.g. Farkas 1992, Schlenker 2005, Szabolcsi 2021, Costantini 2023, among others). In the case of imperatives, to the best of our knowledge, this relation between imperatives and other instances of defective

environments has not been addressed. All in all, we believe that the data presented can open the way to reconsider the place of defectiveness in the phenomenon of obviation and it can open a new line of inquiry regarding the commonalities and differences between imperatives, subjunctives and pseudo-relatives, which could shed more light on the analysis of all these constructions.

5. Final remarks

In this paper, we argued that perception verbs in combination with pseudo-relatives trigger an obviation effect. This obviation effect illustrates why these perception verbs do not allow passivization, reflexivization and passive *se*, but accept other similar argument structures, such as impersonal *se*. We also proposed the conjecture that this obviation effect is related to some kind of defectiveness, which is presumably imposed by the direct perception verbs and that it is to be found for them also in ordinary complement clauses. This defectiveness seems to be at play in other previously observed obviation configurations as well, such as in subjunctive finite clauses as complement of obligatory control verbs and in imperatives. We found this conjecture a promising line of inquiry for future work.

Acknowledgments

We presented previous versions of this paper in the XVII Meeting of SAEL and in the workshop “Romance Languages: Recent Contributions to Linguistic Theory”. We are very thankful to the audience of those meetings and, especially to Roberta Pires de Oliveira and Cilene Rodrigues, who invited us to contribute to this dossier. We also express our gratitude to José Camacho and Andrés Saab for reading a draft, to Romina Trebisacce, Matías Verdecchia and Andrea Bohrn for helping us with data and judgments and to Rocío Maure for helping us improve our writing. As usual, all errors and omissions are ours.

References

- Aldama García, Nuria. 2018. The object-gap pseudorelative generalization. *Borealis: An International Journal of Hispanic Linguistics* 7: 169-179. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.7557/1.7.1.4405>
- Baker, Mark, Kyle Johnson & Ian Roberts. 1988. Passive arguments raised. *Linguistic Inquiry*, 20(2): 219-251.
- Bianchi, Valentina. 2003. On Finiteness as Logophoric Anchoring. In J. Guéron & L. Tasmowski (eds.), *Temps et Point de Vue / Tense and Point of View*, 213-246. Nanterre: Université Paris X.
- Bordelois, Ivonne. 1974. *The grammar of Spanish causative complements*. Ph.D. thesis, Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

Brucart, José M. 1999. La estructura del sintagma nominal: las oraciones de relativo, in I. Bosque & V. Demonte (eds), *Gramática descriptiva de la lengua española*, 395-522. Madrid, Espasa Calpe.

Camacho, José. 2011. Sobre la naturaleza del sujeto nulo en el complemento de verbos de percepción. *Cuadernos de la ALFAL* 3: 11-29.

Campos, Héctor. 1994. Pseudo-elevación y pseudo-relativas. In V. Demonte (ed.), *Gramática del español*, 201-236. México: El colegio de México.

Carrasco Gutiérrez, Ángeles. 1999. El tiempo verbal y la sintaxis oracional. La consecutio temporum. In I. Bosque & V. Demonte (eds), *Gramática descriptiva de la lengua española*, 3061-3128. Madrid: Espasa Calpe.

Casalicchio, Jan. 2013. *Pseudorrelative, gerundi e infiniti nelle varietà romanze: affinità solo superficiale e corrispondenze strutturali*. Ph.D. thesis, Padova: Università degli Studi di Padova.

Casalicchio, Jan & Peter Herbeck. 2022. Pseudo-relative clauses, infinitives and gerunds with Spanish perception verbs: A comparative view. Ms., lingbuzz/006720.

Castillo Ros, Lorena. 2017. A Note on an ECM asymmetry in Spanish, *Isogloss* 3: 69–76. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5565/rev/isogloss.67>

Cinque, Guglielmo. 1992. The pseudo-relative and acc-ing constructions after verbs of perception, *Working Papers in Linguistics* 2: 1–31.

Costantini, Francesco. 2009. *Interface Perspectives on Clausal Complementation. The Case of Subjunctive Obviation*. Venezia: Libreria Editrice Cafoscarina.

Costantini, Francesco. 2023. On some epistemic access effects. In J. Goncharov & H. Zeijlstra (eds). *Agency and Intentions in Language*, 27-53. Leiden/Boston: Brill.

Di Tullio, Ángela. 1998. Complementos no flexivos de verbos de percepción física en español. *Verba* 25: 197–221.

Di Tullio, Ángela, Saab, Andrés & Pablo Zdrojewski. 2019. Clitic Doubling in a Doubling World: The Case of Argentinean Spanish Reconsidered. In A. J. Gallego (ed.), *The Syntactic Variation of Spanish Dialects*, 215-244. New York: Oxford University Press. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1093/oso/9780190634797.003.0008>,

Dubinsky, Stanley & Robert Hamilton. 1998. Epithets as antilogophoric pronouns”. *Linguistic Inquiry* 29: 685-693.

Farkas, Donka F. 1988. On obligatory control. *Linguistics and philosophy* 11(1): 27-58.

Farkas, Donka F. 1992. On obviation. In I. Sag & A. Szabolcsi (eds.). *Lexical matters*, 85-109. Stanford University: CSLI.

-
- Gili Gaya, Samuel. 1961. *Curso superior de sintaxis española*. Barcelona: Bibliograf.
- Higginbotham, James. 1983. The logic of perceptual reports: An extensional alternative to situation semantics. *The Journal of Philosophy* 80: 100–127.
- Keenan, Edward L. & Bernard Comrie. 1977. Noun Phrase Accessibility and Universal Grammar, *Linguistic Inquiry* 8(1): 63-99.
- Kempchinsky, Paula. 1985. The subjunctive disjoint reference Effect. In C. Neidle & R. Núñez Cedeño (eds.), *Studies in Romance Linguistics*, 123-140. Dordrecht: Foris.
- Kempchinsky, Paula. 1986. *Romance subjunctive clauses and logical form*. Phd Dissertation, Los Angeles: UCLA.
- Kempchinsky, Paula. 2009. What can the subjunctive disjoint reference effect tell us about the subjunctive? *Lingua* 119(12): 1788–1810. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.lingua.2008.11.009>.
- Link, Godehard. 1998. Hydras: on the logic of relative clause constructions with multiple heads. In G. Link, *Algebraic semantics in language and philosophy*, 77-88. Stanford: CSLI Publications.
- Mendikoetxea, Amaya. 1999. “Construcciones inacusativas y pasivas”. In I. Bosque & V. Demonte. *Gramática descriptiva de la lengua española*, 1575-1629. Madrid: Espasa Calpe.
- Moulton, Keir, & Nino Grillo. 2015. Pseudo Relatives: big and direct. In T. Bui & D. Ozyildiz, (eds.) *NELS 45: Proceedings of the Forty-fifth Annual Meeting of the North East Linguistic Society*, 193-202. Amherst: GLSA (Graduate Linguistics Student Association).
- Picallo, Maria del Carmen. 1984. The Infl Node and the Null Subject Parameter. *Linguistic Inquiry*, 15(1): 75-102.
- Picallo, Maria del Carmen. 1985. *Opaque domains*. Ph.D. thesis, New York: CUNY.
- Postal, Paul. 1986. *Studies of passive clauses*. New York: State of New York University Press.
- Pujalte, Mercedes and Andrés Saab. 2012. Syncretism as PF-repair: The case of *se*-insertion in Spanish. In M. C. Cuervo y Y. Roberge (eds), *The end of argument structure?*, 229–260. Bingley: Emerald. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1163/9781780523774_011
- RAE & ASALE. 2009. *Nueva Gramática de la Lengua Española*. Ciudad Autónoma de Buenos Aires: Espasa.
- Rafel, Joan. 2000. From complementizer to preposition: Evidence from romance, *Probus* 12: 67–91. <https://doi.org/10.1515/prbs.2000.12.1.67>

Raposo, Eduardo. 1985. Some Asymmetries in the Binding Theory in Romance". *The Linguistic Review* 5: 75-110.

Rizzi, Luigi. 2001. On the position "Int(errogative)" in the left periphery of the clause. In G. Cinque & G. Salvi, *Current studies in Italian syntax: Essays Offered to Lorenzo Renzi*, 287-296. Amsterdam: Elsevier. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1163/9780585473949_016

Saab, Andrés & Pablo Zdrojewski. 2021. On the Nonexistence of Asymmetric DOM in Spanish. *Linguistic Inquiry* 52(4): 852–866. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1162/ling_a_00389

Schlenker, Philippe. 2005. The Lazy Frenchman's approach to the subjunctive (speculations on reference to worlds, presuppositions, and semantic defaults in the analysis of mood). In T. Geerts, I. van Ginneken & H. Jacobs (eds.), *Romance Languages and Linguistic Theory*, 269-309. Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins.

Sheehan, Michelle & Sonia Cyrino. 2023. Restrictions on Long Passives in English and Brazilian Portuguese: A Phase-Based Account. *Linguistic Inquiry* 54:1, 1-35;doi: https://doi.org/10.1162/ling_a_00482

Stegovec, Adrian. 2019. Perspectival control and obviation in directive clauses, *Natural Language Semantics* 27: 47–94. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11050-019-09150-x>

Suñer, Margarita. 1984. Controlled pro. In P. Baldi (ed.), *Linguistic Symposium of Romance Languages* 12, 253–273.

Suñer, Margarita. 1986. On the referential properties of embedded finite clause subjects". In I. Bordelois, H. Contreras & K. Zagona. *Generative Studies in Spanish Syntax*, 183-196. Dordrecht: Foris.

Szabolcsi, Anna. 2021. Obviation in Hungarian: what is its scope, and is it due to competition? *Glossa* 6: 1-28. <https://doi.org/10.5334/gjgl.1421>