

Changes affecting relative clauses in Late Modern English and equative complementisers as relativisers*

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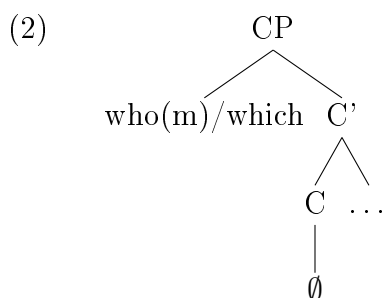
1 Introduction

relative pronouns in present-day Standard English: partial case distinction and distinction with respect to human vs. non-human antecedents:

- (1) a. I saw the woman **who** lives next door in the park.
- b. The woman **who/whom** I saw in the park lives next door.
- c. I saw the cat **which** lives next door in the park.
- d. The cat **which** I saw in the park lives next door.

who(m) possible with certain animals – “sanctioned borderline cases” (see Herrmann 2005: 41, quoting Quirk et al. 1985)

structure:

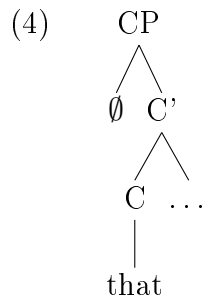


that-relatives also possible – operator zero, complementiser *that* overt:

- (3) a. I saw the woman **that** lives next door in the park.
- b. The woman **that** I saw in the park lives next door.
- c. I saw the cat **that** lives next door in the park.
- d. The cat **that** I saw in the park lives next door.

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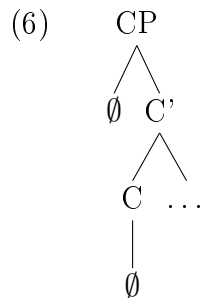
structure:



zero relatives possible with object relative clauses:

- (5)
- a. *I saw the woman lives next door in the park.
 - b. The woman I saw in the park lives next door.
 - c. *I saw the cat lives next door in the park.
 - d. The cat I saw in the park lives next door.

structure:



but: standard pattern not observed in dialects, standard pattern in fact peculiar across dialects and languages

- pronoun *which* possible with human antecedents (see Herrmann 2005) – (7a)
- Van Gelderen (2009: 163): English speakers prefer *that* over a *wh*-pronoun “by at least a 4:1 ratio” (cf. Romaine 1982, Montgomery & Bailey 1991, Van Gelderen 2004), Tagliamonte et al. 2005) – reinforcement of *wh*-pronoun by prescriptive rules, wider distribution of *that* (interchangeable even with PPs involving a *wh*-element, e.g. *from which*) – (7b)
- zero relatives possible with subject relative clauses dialectally (see Herrmann 2005: 55–56) – (5a) and (5c) possible; see (7c)
- *as* available as a relative complementiser (Herrmann 2005, Kortmann & Wagner 2007) – (7d)

- (7)
- a. [...] And the boy **which** I was at school with [...]
(*Freiburg English Dialect Corpus* Wes_019; Herrmann 2005: 42, ex. 4a)
 - b. I haven't been to a party yet **that** I haven't got home the same night.
(Van Gelderen 2009: 161, ex. 8, citing Miller 1993: 112)
 - c. [...] It was my grandmother owned this bit of land [...]
(*Northern Ireland Transcribed Corpus of Speech* A13.3; Herrmann 2005: 64, ex. 25b)
 - d. [...] so all **as** he had to do were go round in a circle all the time [...]
(*Freiburg English Dialect Corpus* Som_001; Herrmann 2005: 64, ex. 26d)

patterns in (7): historically attested, not innovative (unlike *what* with nominal antecedents, cf. Kortmann & Wagner 2007)

→ questions:

- what changes took place in Late Modern English
- what internal and external factors are responsible for the changes and how dialectal variation can be accounted for
- what the status of *as* in relative clauses is

proposal:

- changes took place in Late Modern English – dialectal patterns still present in Early Modern English texts such as the King James Bible – comparison of King James Bible (1611/1769) and New King James version (1989)
- external factors: standardisation and dialectal variation
- internal factors: specificity versus genericity – *as* in relative clauses is reduced to “equative relative clauses” and not extended to ordinary relative clauses

2 Changes in Modern English

as described by Kortmann & Wagner (2007) and Herrmann (2005): dialectal patterns in (7) attested historically

problem: difficult to compare data

- optionality – the choice of one strategy does not imply the impossibility of other strategies
- context, particular construction may influence the choice – comparing highly different sentences, even through a large corpus, is not conclusive
- register has an influence – difficult to compare due to varying degrees of standardisation, prescriptive rules etc.

here: comparison of King James Bible (1611/1769) and New King James version (1989)

- original version of 1611, standardised spelling of 1769 by Benjamin Blayney
- new version: essentially adheres to the original version, as far as the construction is grammatical in present-day Standard English

advantages:

- same loci – differences cannot be due to different sentences; allows for some quantitative comparison
- same register – no radical modernisation, forms that are partly archaic are not necessarily ruled out
- differences from the original: reveal some differences between Early Modern English and Late Modern English, essentially indicating changes that took place in Late Modern English

methodology: hits for “*who*” and “*whom*” in the New King James version and examining the corresponding element in the original version – preference for the relative pronoun strategy with *who(m)* with human referents in present-day Standard English, expectation is that many of these occurrences have different equivalents (unlikely to be many changes the other way round)

altogether: 6035 hits for *who* and 762 hits for *whom* – results include interrogatives (especially for *who*) and cases where the original King James version uses constructions other than relative clauses

first count: 5333 subjective relative clauses corresponding to *who*, 388 objective relative clauses corresponding to *whom* (altogether 670 relative clauses, including *whom* as part of a PP)

no equivalents with a zero relative → this option not discussed here

otherwise: relative frequencies highly reminiscent of the present-day dialectal patterns (see Herrmann 2005)

about 464 (8,7%) cases where *who* has the equivalent *who* in the original version, about 297 (76,55%) cases where *whom* has the equivalent *whom* in the original version

- (8)
- a. And the LORD appeared unto Abram, and said, Unto thy seed will I give this land: and there builded he an altar unto the LORD, **who** appeared unto him.
(King James Bible; Genesis 12:7)
 - b. Then the Lord appeared to Abram and said, "To your descendants I will give this land." And there he built an altar to the Lord, **who** had appeared to him.
(New King James version; Genesis 12:7)
 - c. And I have also heard the groaning of the children of Israel, **whom** the Egyptians keep in bondage; and I have remembered my covenant.
(King James Bible; Exodus 6:5)
 - d. And I have also heard the groaning of the children of Israel **whom** the Egyptians keep in bondage, and I have remembered My covenant.
(New King James version; Exodus 6:5)

about 1176 (22,05%) cases where *who* has the equivalent *which* in the original version, about 74 (19,07%) cases where *whom* has the equivalent *which* in the original version

- (9)
- a. And the vessel of earth, that he toucheth **which** hath the issue, shall be broken: and every vessel of wood shall be rinsed in water.
(King James Bible; Leviticus 15:12)
 - b. The vessel of earth that he **who** has the discharge touches shall be broken, and every vessel of wood shall be rinsed in water.
(New King James version; Leviticus 15:12)
 - c. These are those that were numbered, **which** Moses and Aaron numbered, and the princes of Israel, being twelve men: each one was for the house of his fathers.
(King James Bible; Numbers 1:44)
 - d. These are the ones who were numbered, **whom** Moses and Aaron numbered, with the leaders of Israel, twelve men, each one representing his father's house.
(New King James version; Numbers 1:44)

about 3629 (68,05%) cases where *who* has the equivalent *that* in the original version,
about 14 (3,61%) cases where *whom* has the equivalent *that* in the original version

- (10) a. And I charged your judges at that time, saying, Hear the causes between your brethren, and judge righteously between every man and his brother, and the stranger **that** is with him.
(King James Bible; Deuteronomy 1:16)
- b. Then I commanded your judges at that time, saying, ‘Hear the cases between your brethren, and judge righteously between a man and his brother or the stranger **who** is with him.
(New King James version; Deuteronomy 1:16)
- c. Then said Zebul unto him, Where is now thy mouth, wherewith thou saidst, Who is Abimelech, that we should serve him? is not this the people **that** thou hast despised? go out, I pray now, and fight with them.
(King James Bible; Judges 9:38)
- d. Then Zebul said to him, “Where indeed is your mouth now, with which you said, ‘Who is Abimelech, that we should serve him?’ Are not these the people **whom** you despised? Go out, if you will, and fight with them now.”
(New King James version; Judges 9:38)

about 22 (0,41%) cases where *who* has the equivalent *as* in the original version, no such examples with *whom*

- (11) a. And she looked, and, behold, the king stood at his pillar at the entering in, and the princes and the trumpets by the king: and all the people of the land rejoiced, and sounded with trumpets, also the singers with instruments of musick, and such **as** taught to sing praise. Then Athaliah rent her clothes, and said, Treason, Treason.
(King James Bible; 2 Chronicles 23:13)
- b. When she looked, there was the king standing by his pillar at the entrance; and the leaders and the trumpeters were by the king. All the people of the land were rejoicing and blowing trumpets, also the singers with musical instruments, and those **who** led in praise. So Athaliah tore her clothes and said, “Treason! Treason!”
(New King James version; 2 Chronicles 23:13)

sample statistics from the *Genesis* and the *Exodus*:

element in NKJV	clause type	role in KJB	element in KJB	number of occurrences
<i>who</i> (205)	interrogative	subject	<i>who</i>	18
		other	–	1
	relative (186)	subject	<i>who</i>	22 (11,83%)
			<i>which</i>	45 (24,19%)
			<i>that</i>	113 (60,75%)
	other	<i>as</i>	2 (2,33%)	
		–	4	
<i>whom</i> (65)	interrogative	other	–	1
	relative (64)	object	<i>whom</i>	21 (32,81%)
			<i>which</i>	19 (29,69%)
			<i>that</i>	1 (1,56%)
	other	–	23	

findings concerning the King James Bible:

- dialectal patterns indeed attested and actually quite dominant
- relative clauses with *as* a minority pattern

standardisation from 18th century onwards leading to differences in Late Modern English

reasons to some extent different:

- *which*: effect of standardisation (clear-cut animacy distinction in Standard English but not in all dialects)
- *that*: effect of standardisation (promotion of relative pronoun strategy) and regional differences
- *as*: specific, restricted construction anyway and regional differences

New King James version: conservative use of *who* and *whom*: only for human antecedents, clear morpho-phonological case distinction

use of *which* as a relative pronoun with human referents: occurs in five of the six dialect regions examined by Herrmann (2005: 41–45): Central Southwest, East Anglia, Central Midlands, Central North, Scotland (and to a limited extent in Northern Ireland, where *wh*-pronouns hardly occur) – not regionally bound, but altogether not more dominant for non-human referents than *who* (see Herrmann 2005: 41, Table 3)

→ differences regarding *which* between the King James Bible and the new version reflect differences between Early Modern English and Late Modern English (and changes occurring during Late Modern English) – external and internal factors coincide (external: standardisation + variation even in dialects + differences between dialects; internal: grammaticalisation of the [\pm human] feature)

use of *that* as a relative marker with human referents: considerable dialectal differences and not an exclusive strategy in any of the dialects (*that* much more dominant in the North (Northern Ireland, Scotland, Central North, Central Midlands; see Herrmann 2005: 27, Figure 1), but overall the most typical strategy in dialects (Herrmann 2005: 24); distribution of *that*-relatives different in the Standard language but not excluded

→ differences regarding *that* between the King James Bible and the new version reflect the effect of standardisation and the influence of a particularly formal register – external factors (formal register + standardisation + variation even in dialects + differences between dialects)

use of *as* as a relative marker with human referents: considerable dialectal differences (altogether absent from many regions) and not a dominant strategy in any of the dialects (*as* occurs in the South – especially Central Midlands, see Herrmann 2005: 27, Figure 1), overall on the retreat (see also Kortmann & Wagner 2007), restricted use anyway (examples cited by Herrmann 2005 all include a matrix element selecting for the *as*-clauses)

→ differences regarding *as* between the King James Bible and the new version reflect changes between Early Modern English and Late Modern English (and changes occurring during Late Modern English) – external and internal factors coincide (external: standardisation + variation even in dialects + differences between dialects + particular form diminishing; internal: particular form restricted anyway, highly specific already in the King James Bible)

3 Equative relative clauses

relative clauses with *as* in the King James Bible: matrix element *such* always present

- (12) a. Now therefore let us make a covenant with our God to put away all the wives, and **such as** are born of them, according to the counsel of my lord, and of those that tremble at the commandment of our God; and let it be done according to the law.
(King James Bible; Ezra 10:3)
- b. Open thy mouth for the dumb in the cause of **all such as** are appointed to destruction.
(King James Bible; Proverbs 31:8)

first count: 22 cases, out of which 18 cases have no additional *all*, see (11a) and (12a), and 4 do, see (12b)

similar in present-day English dialects: matrix element *all* (Herrmann 2005)

- (13) [...] so **all as** he had to do were go round in a circle all the time [...]
(*Freiburg English Dialect Corpus* Som_001; Herrmann 2005: 64, ex. 26d)

→ presence of *all* originally has to do with a typical group-defining character of the sentence, later *all* grammaticalised as a matrix marker

crucially: some matrix equative-like element present, the *as*-relative differs from ordinary relative complementisers (such as *that* or German *wo*, cf. Brandner & Bräuning 2013, Bacskai-Atkari 2016)

→ essentially lack of grammaticalisation of *as* in relative clauses as a relative complementiser in English dialects, coinciding with standardisation – pattern on the retreat

compare German:

- (14) a. **sulike** gesidoe **so** he im selbo gecos
 such companions so he him self chose
 ‘such companions that he chose for himself’
 (*Heliand* 1280 (Old Saxon); Brandner & Bräuning 2013: 138, ex. 20)
- b. **So** ware **so** ich cherte minen zoum ...
 so where so I guided my rein
 ‘Wherever I guided my rein ...’
 (*Bairischer Psalm* 138 (Old High German); Brandner & Bräuning 2013: 143, ex. 30, quoting Lühr 1998)
- c. hier das Geld **so** ich neulich nicht habe mitschicken können
 here the.M money so I recently not have with.send.INF can
 ‘Here the money that I recently could not send.’
 (Schiller to Goethe 127 (Early New High German); Brandner & Bräuning 2013: 132, ex. 4, quoting Paul 1920)

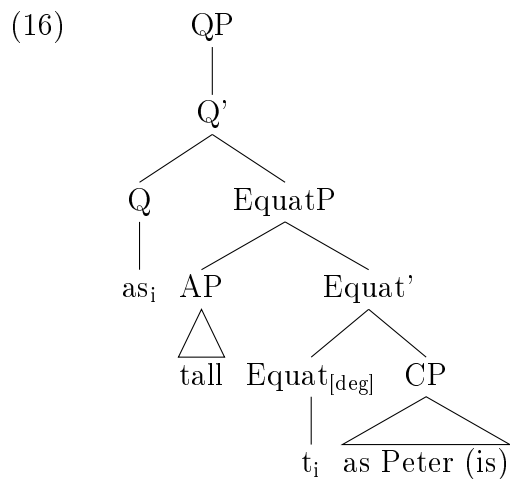
pattern in (14c) differs from previous German patterns (and from the English patterns): fully grammaticalised

idea (Bacskai-Atkari 2016): equative relative clauses differ from degree equatives only in whether a gradable predicate argument is present in the equative clause or not

degree equatives:

- (15) Mary is **as tall as** Peter (is).

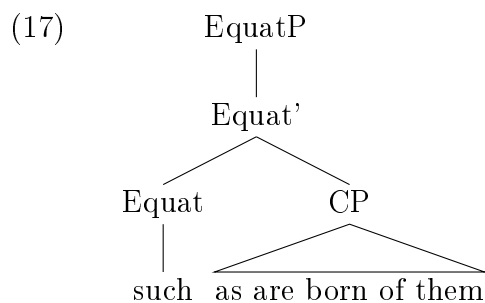
structure for degree equatives:



properties:

- EquatP analogous to DegP in comparatives (see Lechner 2004 and Bacskai-Atkari 2014 on the position of the AP and the CP)
- QP generated above the DegP, the Deg moves to Q – cf. Bresnan (1973) and Corver (1997) on Q elements; see also Lechner (1999)

structure for equative relatives:



properties:

- EquatP similar to the one in degree equatives, but no lexical AP and no [deg]
- no QP generated
- structure applies to equative relative clauses, not to all relative clauses
- Equat head not specified for degree interpretation → elements like *all* can also be reinterpreted as Equat elements

equative relative head did not grammaticalise into a general relative marker during Early or Late Modern English, standardisation processes and dialectal developments in Late Modern English contributed to its retreat

4 Conclusion

changes affecting relative clauses in Modern English – contrastive corpus study based on the King James Bible and the New King James version

differences between the two texts reflect the changes that took place in Late Modern English quite well: earlier variation in elements corresponding to *who/whom* confined to dialects

factors behind the changes external and internal for all types (*which, that, as*)

particular case of *as*: special construction, confined to equative relative clauses → lack of grammaticalisation paired up with lack of standardisation

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