

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

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Introduction

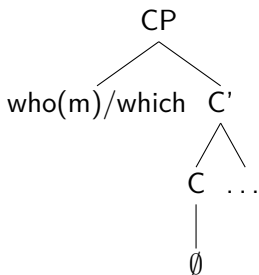
relative pronouns in present-day Standard English: partial case distinction and distinction with respect to human vs. non-human antecedents:

- (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

(2)

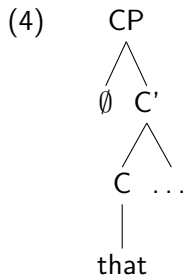


Relatives with *that*

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.

Structure

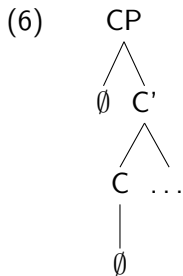


Relatives with zero

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



Dialects

- 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)

Examples

- (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)

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

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.

Comparison

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

Method

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

Results

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)

Pronouns *who* and *whom*

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. (...) Unto thy seed will I give this land: and there builded he an altar unto the LORD, **who** appeared unto him.
 - b. (...) “To your descendants I will give this land.” And there he built an altar to the Lord, **who** had appeared to him.
 - c. And I have also heard the groaning of the children of Israel, **whom** the Egyptians keep in bondage (...)
 - d. And I have also heard the groaning of the children of Israel **whom** the Egyptians keep in bondage (...)

Pronoun *which*

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 (...)
 - b. The vessel of earth that he **who** has the discharge touches shall be broken (...)
 - c. These are those that were numbered, **which** Moses and Aaron numbered (...)
 - d. These are the ones who were numbered, **whom** Moses and Aaron numbered (...)

Complementiser *that*

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. (...) Hear the causes between your brethren, and judge righteously between every man and his brother, and the stranger **that** is with him.
 - b. (...) 'Hear the cases between your brethren, and judge righteously between a man and his brother or the stranger **who** is with him.
 - c. (...) is not this the people **that** thou hast despised? go out, I pray now, and fight with them.
 - d. (...) Are not these the people **whom** you despised? Go out, if you will, and fight with them now."

Complementiser *as*

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. (...)
- 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. (...)

Data from *Genesis* and *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>
			<i>which</i>	19 (29,69%)
			<i>that</i>	1 (1,56%)
		other	–	23

Findings

- 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

Pronouns *who(m)* versus *which*

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 – 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)

Pronoun *who(m)* versus complementiser *that*

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), 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)

Pronoun *who(m)* versus complementiser *as*

- use of *as* as a relative marker with human referents: considerable dialectal differences (absent from many regions) and not a dominant strategy in any dialect (*as* occurs in the South, see Herrmann 2005), overall on the retreat (see also Kortmann & Wagner 2007), restricted use anyway
- 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)

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)

Present-day 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)

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

German

- (14) a. **sulike** gesidoe **so** he im selbo gecos
'such companions that he chose for himself'
(*Heliand* 1280; Brandner & Bräuning 2013, 138)
- b. **So** ware **so** ich cherte minen zoum ...
'Wherever I guided my rein ...'
(*Bairischer Psalm* 138; Brandner & Bräuning 2013, 143, quoting Lühr 1998)
- c. hier das Geld **so** ich neulich nicht habe mitschicken können
'Here the money that I recently could not send.'
(Schiller to Goethe 127; Brandner & Bräuning 2013, 132, quoting Paul 1920)

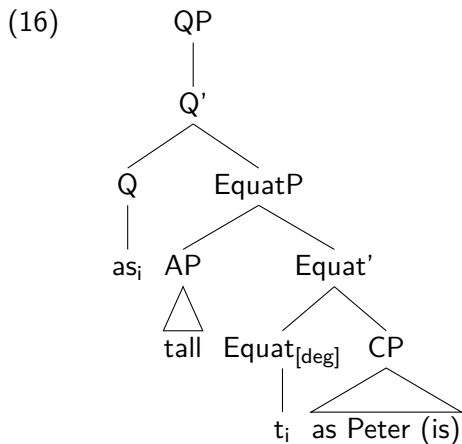
Equatives

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).

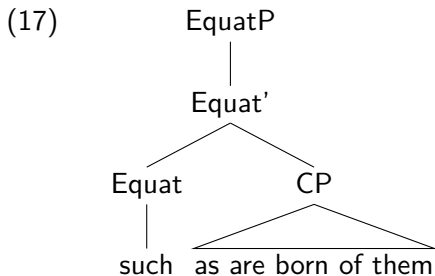
Structure for degree equatives



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

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

Thank you!

Danke!

Tack!

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