

Resumption and Movement in Early Modern English Relative Clauses

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What We're Looking At

- (1) a. This seemed to be done in distrust of the privy council, as if they might stifle his evidence; **[[which to prevent ___], he put it in safe hands]** [Gilbert Burnet, *History of my own time*, 1683–1713]
- b. Mr Hoby, my Mother, and my selfe, went to visitt some freindes **[[who, ___ beinge not at home], we returned]** [Lady Margaret Hoby, *Diary*, 1599–1601]
- c. receive then this Draught **[with which when thou art refresh'd ___], thou mayst more strongly proceed to other Matters which yet remain]** [Richard Preston (tr.), *Consolation of Philosophy*, 1695]

Call them *Relatives with a Leftward Island*, or RLIs.

First Pass Characterisation

- A relative clause, consisting of:
 - A relative pronoun, at the left edge of:
 - A strong island, which contains:
 - The gap associated with the relative pronoun, to the left of:
 - The “matrix” clause.

The Building Blocks

Mr Hoby, my Mother, and my selfe, went to visitt some freindes

Antecedent clause

who, ___ beinge not at home, we retourned

Island clause

Matrix clause

Relative with a Leftward Island

How to Interpret an RLI

- **Nonrestrictive** relatives (*continuative*, in Jespersen's sense);
- Used to **advance the narrative** w.r.t. the antecedent clause;
- Pronoun is interpreted like a **definite, anaphoric pronoun**, but fronted;
 - ...to prevent *this*, he put it in safe hands
- The island is sometimes **semantically dependent on the following matrix**, never on the antecedent.

(2) ye abstaine from meates offered to idoles, and from blood, & from things strangled, and from fornication: [[from which **if** ye keepe your selues ___], yee shall doe well].
[New Testament, Authorized Version, 1611]

Basic Facts I

- Noted by Jespersen and Visser, and briefly in *Cambridge History*. Also studies by Rissanen (1984); van der Wurff (1988), and Kytö & Rissanen (1993). Initially brought to my attention by Jack Hoeksema.
- Examples to be discussed here come from Penn Parsed Corpora - 404 tokens, 1 per c.4,500 words.
- Almost unattested (3 examples) before the 16th century.
- Robustly attested as soon as they came into existence.

Basic Facts II

- Many long texts contain no examples, which may suggest not acquired by everyone.
- Concentrated in philosophical or religious works, sometimes claimed (e.g. by van der Wurff) to be a borrowing from Latin (Moessner 1992; Rissanen 1999: borrowing from French), but found in texts from all registers to some extent
- Died out gradually, mainly over the 19th century (last example in Visser is from 1883), after a heyday in the 16th and 17th centuries.

Basic Facts III

- Not unique to EModE: similar examples exist in at least Latin (Madvig 1870), Medieval Italian (Bianchi 1999), Early Modern Dutch (Ackema & Neeleman 2007), Bavarian German (Felix 1985), and Hindi (Rajesh Bhatt, p.c.).

- (3) das ist der Wein [[den wenn ich ___ trink], krieg ich
 this is the wine which if I drink get I
 Kopfweh].
 headache
 “This is the wine which I get a headache if I drink.”

- This example is **restrictive**, though (also found in Latin and Hindi) — not clear if exactly the same construction.

The Plan

- 1 Get a synchronic analysis in place (most of the talk).

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- 2 Turn to some considerations in the diachronic development (more speculative).

Things We Don't Find

- (4) a. ✓A married Gentleman coming through Canterbury, his Horse threw him, **[[which a young Gentlewoman seeing ___], fell a laughing]** [Anonymous, *Penny Merriments*, 1685–7]
- b. **No rightward islands**
*... [which a young Gentlewoman fell a laughing [seeing ___]]
- c. **No unbounded dependencies**
*... [which I think [that [a young Gentlewoman seeing ___], fell a laughing]]

Conclusion: the relative pronoun remains within the island (*contra* Felix, Van der Wurff).

Further Properties I

- We never see any obvious gap where the island could have moved from → it's base-generated at the left.

(5) *John, [[who [___ and Bill]] we saw ___ last night]

- Relevant examples are overwhelmingly in appositive relatives (401/404 examples).

- (6) a. *I wonder [[which married Gentleman a young Gentlewoman seeing ___] fell a laughing].
b. *The thing [that a young Gentlewoman seeing ___] fell a laughing] was actually heartbreaking.

Further Properties II

- The relatives are always sentence final.
 - Punctuation is unreliable, but these relatives have a tendency to be separated from what goes before by heavy punctuation (5x more likely than other relatives).
- (7) they went about to slay him. **Which** when the brethren knew ____, they brought him downe to Cesarea, and sent him forth to Tarsus.

Consequences

- We saw that the island is base-generated as a left-adjunct to the matrix, and that the A'-chain is entirely within that adjunct.
 - Left-adjoined constituents are leftward islands, so we instantly capture those properties.
 - Also explains sentence-final position: the island is syntactically dependent only on following material. The RLI is **syntactically** independent of the antecedent clause — the only link is **semantic**.
- This predicts that every island in an RLI should be found in non-RLIs as a left-adjunct.

Left-Adjunction in RLI and Non-RLIs I

Finite adverbial clauses:

- (8) a. **RLI:** but not so easie work found Ethelfrid against another part of Britans that stood in arms, [[whom **though** at last he overthrew ___], **yet** with slaughter nigh as great to his own souldiers]. [John Milton, *The history of Britain, that part especially now call'd England*, 1670]
- b. **Non-RLI:** And [[**though** the upper part of Weredale be not very fertile of corne]; **yet** ys there very fine gresse in the dale self wher the ryver passith]. [John Leland, *Itinerary*, 1535–43]

Left-Adjunction in RLI and Non-RLIs II

Comparative correlatives (rare):

- (9) a. **RLI:** For to try Doctrines is to enquire into the grounds and reasons of them; [[which **the better** any man understands ___], **the more firmly** he will be established in the Truth]. [John Tillotson, Sermon, 1679]
- b. **Non-RLI:** [[**The sooner** a child is put to School], **the better** it is] [Charles Hoole, *A New Discovery of the Old Art of Teaching Schoole*, 1660]

Left-Adjunction in RLI and Non-RLIs III

Leftward **purpose clauses**:

- (10) a. **RLI**: if it [your butter] be ouer cold it will not come at all . . . , [[which faults **to** helpe ___] if you churne your butter in the heate of Sommer it shall not be amisse, if . . .] [Gervase Markham, *Coutrey Contentments*, 1615]
- b. **Non-RLI**: [[**To** make children to take a delight in spelling], let them spell many syllables together, which differ but only in one letter, as hand, band, land, sand, &c.] [John Brinsley, *Ludus Literarius or The Grammar Schoole*, 1627]

Left-Adjunction in RLIs and Non-RLIs IV

Present participial absolutes:

- (11) a. **RLI:** wee espied three saile being small boats, sleightly wrought together, called Paugaias which we made after and tooke, [[which **they on shore espying** ___], they sent out an Aduisor] [Robert Coverte, *A Trve and Almost Incredible Report of an Englishman*, 1612]
- b. **Non-RLI:** three or four Male-Carps will follow a Female; and ... then [[**she putting on a seeming coyness**], they force her through weeds and flags] [Izaak Walton, *The Compleat Angler*, 1676]

Left-Adjunction in RLIs and Non-RLIs V

Past participial absolutes:

- (12) a. **RLI:** having opened the Letter, he gave it to me to read for him, [[**which** ___ **ended**], he said he would answer it] [John Drummond, 1st Earl Melfort, Letter to King James the Second from Rome, 1690]
- b. **Non-RLI:** [[**she gone**], comes my wife and to walk in the garden] [Samuel Pepys, Diary, 1667]

Semantics of the Relative Pronoun I

- There is **no syntactic relationship** between the relative pronoun and its antecedent.
- They also **needn't be string-adjacent** (though they usually are) — as with EModE appositives in general:

- (13) a. They went ouer **y^e water** to the churche of the sayde Seyntis, [**whiche** is an arme of the see] [Anonymous chaplain, Journal, 1506]
- b. Do **a longe rowe of seruauntes goyng in order waytyng vpon the**, make the happye and good? [[**whyche** yf they be euyll manerd], then be they a perilous charge to they house, and a veheme~t greuous burden to the, beynge their mayster]. [George Colville (tr.), *Consolation of Philosophy*, 1556]

Semantics of the Relative Pronoun II

- This explains why **RLIs are nonrestrictive**: any standard story about the semantics of restrictive relatives is based on a syntactic relation holding between relative clause and some projection of the antecedent (to permit, e.g., predicate modification).
- But the pronoun in an RLI **needs an overt, accessible, antecedent** (*that*/**which was interesting*).
- The interpretation of the pronoun is **definite** → the relative pronoun is an **E-type pronoun**.
- See also Sells (1986); Demirdache (1991) on PDE nonrestrictive relative pronouns.

Synchrony: Summary

- An RLI is based around an independently occurring **base-generated left-adjunction** configuration.
- The pronoun is fronted **within the left-adjoined clause**.
- There is **no syntactic relation** between the RLI and its antecedent, and **no string-adjacency** requirement.
- The relative pronoun is an **E-type pronoun**.
- So the island in an RLI is **syntactically** dependent on the **following clause**, while the relative pronoun is **semantically** dependent on **preceding material**.

Resumptive RLI

A related construction appeared in 14th-15th century English. It differed in that there was a **resumptive pronoun**, not a gap, at the foot of the chain.

- (14)
- a. I beseche þe, chef soueraygne Lord, graunte me þi signet, [[where-of when þat she haþ knalage **þer-of**], þat she may applie hur will to þi godly purpose]. [Sermon, CMROYAL, c.1425]
 - b. For schrewes . . . doon ofte time thinges [[the whiche thingis, whan thei han doon **hem**], they demen that tho thinges ne scholden nat han ben doon]. [Geoffrey Chaucer, *Boethius*, c.1380]

Attested in *wh*-relatives (22 hits), but not really in *that*-relatives (2 hits). Note resumption of complements.

MidE Resumption I

Resumption was also found for relativisation from **less accessible** positions (i.e. non-complements)

- (15) Schal we thanne approchen us to hem [that I have schewed [that **thei** ben lyke to beestes]]? [Geoffrey Chaucer, *Boethius*, c.1380]

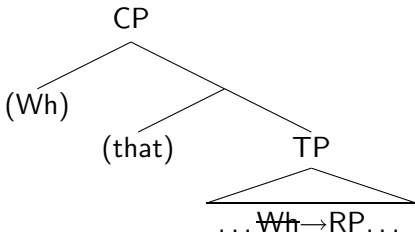
Attested in *that*-relatives (10 hits) and *wh*-relatives (15 hits)

MidE Resumption II

- So resumption in *wh*- and *that*-relatives was largely parallel.
- But in one construction (resumptive RLLs), it is restricted to *wh*-relatives.
- And resumption in resumptive RLLs is not limited to less accessible positions (though too few cases of resumption of complements for certainty).

Two Types of Resumption I

- One type of resumption is much like PDE **intrusive pronouns**: movement leaves a pronoun behind when a gap would violate a locality principle (here, the ECP, although this glosses over some problems).
- Can apply to *wh*-, *that*- or *wh that*-relatives.



Two Types of Resumption III

Special properties of the second structure:

- Restricted to *wh*-relatives, as *that* is a head and so can't undergo phrasal adjunction.
- *Wh*-phrase **needn't strictly c-command** resumptive pronoun (r.p. can be in the matrix).

- (16) a. þat ordre þat was founded at Sempyngham be þe sollicitude of Seynt Gilbert, [[of **wh**ech **Seynt**, be-cause I mad a special tretis on-to þe maystir of þat ordr], þerfor in þis place I touch no mor **of him**].
[John Capgrave, *Capgrave's Sermon*, c.1452]
- b. [[**Every boy's** mother] loves **him**].

Two Types of Resumption IV

Absence of *wh that* in resumptive RLIs is a height effect.

- The left-adjoined clause adjoins above matrix C^0 .

- (17) a. To use Force against her Majesty in her own Realm, must needs be done with intent to depose her, which Force she must needs resist; [[which if she be not able to do ___], **then followeth** her Death and Destruction]. [Trial of Thomas Howard, Earl of Surrey, 4th Duke of Norfolk, 1571]
- b. [[where-of when þat she haþ knalage þer-of], **þat** she may applie hur will to þi godly purpose]. [Sermon, CMROYAL, c.1425]

Two Types of Resumption V

- *When, if, etc.* are above $C^0 \rightarrow \checkmark wh P that, *wh that$

(18) [[**the whiche manere whan that** men looken it in thilke pure clenness of the devyne intelligence], it is ycleped purveaunce]; but [[whanne thilke manere is referred by men to thinges that it moeveth and disponyth], than of olde men it was clepyd destyne]. [[**The whiche thinges yif that** any wyght loketh wel in his thought the strengthe of that oon and of that oothir], he schal lyghtly mowen seen that thise two thinges ben dyvers]. [Geoffrey Chaucer, *Boethius*, c.1380]

Changes in EModE

- To get from the 15th to the 16th century, all you need to do is replace the overt resumptive pronoun with a null one.
- One other construction where null resumptive pronouns yield a plausible analysis: [P *wh*]. . . [P \emptyset] relative clauses.
- Once again, there are **violations of strict c-command**, but within the limits allowed by variable binding.

- (19)
- a. and grashoppes come and breses, [[of **which**] no noubre was [of]] [*The Earliest Complete English Prose Psalter*, c.1350]
 - b. I danced [with **every syntactician**] on **his** birthday.

[P *wh*]. . . [P \emptyset]

- 133 tokens of this construction in the corpora.
- 11 from 1150–1400, 30 from 1400–1450, and frequent from then until end of corpora.
- Although other analyses are feasible (copying and partial deletion), it is striking that we find relative chains in **all and only the configurations in which variable binding is possible** (a proper superset of the configurations in which movement is possible).

The Decline of Doubly Filled COMPs I

- MidE freely allowed doubly filled COMPs, particularly in the 14th and early 15th century (Keyser 1975).

(20) to þe be þankyngge of al oure herte; to me, synful wrecche, noþyng bote confusioun of my face, [which þat ___ haue idoo wyckenesses, and so manye goodneses haue receyued]. [Aelred of Rievaulx, *De Institutione Inclusarum*, c.1400]

- Died out in the 16th century, but died out first in headed relatives.
- Last regular user was William Gregory (24.11 per 100k words), died 1467.
- First regular user of RLIs was Robert Fabyan, born c.1450.

The Decline of Doubly Filled COMPs II

- Doubly filled COMPs are relevant because, on the above analysis, they **must be generated by movement** (although that movement could leave an intrusive pronoun instead of a gap).
- Most regular relatives could in principle be generated by movement or by adjunction and binding.
- The decline of doubly filled COMPs represents a dwindling of the positive evidence for relativisation by movement.
- Could we even suggest that the advent of nonresumptive RLLs reflects a grammar in which **all** relatives are generated by base-generation and binding of a possibly null pronoun?

Conclusions

- MidE had two headed relative constructions with resumptive pronouns:
 - 1 Intrusive pronouns left by movement from less accessible positions for ECP-related reasons
 - 2 Base generated relative pronouns binding pronouns within a left-adjunction structure (resumptive RLI)
- In EModE, null resumption emerged (→ true RLIs).
- True RLIs emerged just as doubly filled COMPs disappeared from headed relatives, and shortly after [P *wh*]... [P \emptyset] constructions became robustly attested.
- These changes jointly give greater evidence for relativisation by binding, and less for relativisation for movement, which may reflect a more widespread change in the grammars of at least some speakers w.r.t. relativisation.

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