The Omission of the Relative Pronouns

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0. Introduction

This paper examines mainly what kind of change the period of about a hundred years 1900-1994 brought to the omission of the objective forms of the relative pronouns, which, that, whom (who), in restrictive relative clauses in prose in American English (AmE) and British English (BrE). It is already a matter of common knowledge that a large number of the relative pronouns used as object are omitted today. However, it may not be known what percentage of the relatives used as object are omitted today, much less how the frequency in the uses of these relatives changed over the period of about a hundred years.

The period 1900-1994 was divided into four to see the change minutely: 1900, 1930, 1960 and 1994, and six weeklies or monthlies published in each of these years were selected, three of which were published in the United States and the other three in Britain, and the magazines made use of total 24. I do not presume that this is an optimal method, nor do I take it for granted that these magazines best represent each year and each country. However, this kind of method would be of some use in grasping the general trend because these materials cover a wide range of topics from short stories to current events.

The materials made use of here are as follows:

AmE:

1. General remarks

When we compare the object form of a relative with the omitted form (zero relative pronoun), the two must be interchangeable. In each of the following (1) (2), the form in which the relative is not omitted and the one in which it is omitted are interchangeable. The instances like these are included here. (The parentheses show zero relative pronoun.)

(1) a. the problem which (or that) we ever faced

b. the problem ( ) we ever faced

(2) a. conversations to which I have listened

conversations which (or that) I have listened to

b. conversations ( ) I have listened to

On the other hand, there are a large number of instances in which the relatives and the omitted form are not interchangeable, and the instances like these are excluded here. Typical instances are shown in the following (A) (B) (C) in which the instances like (A) far outnumber those instances like (B) (C). (Of the following instances, those with asterisks (*) show that they are not acceptable, and those with question marks (?) show that they are doubtful in their acceptability.)

(A) Prepositions + relative pronouns

(1) a. a sad year in which he was obliged to buy . . . (HA 1900)

* a sad year which (that) he was obliged to buy . . .

b. *a sad year ( ) he was obliged to buy . . . in

(2) a. moments in which an attitude is tested (AM 1930)

* moments which (that) an attitude is tested in

b. *moments ( ) an attitude is tested in

(3) a. the way in which I have set these things on (HA 1994)

*the way which (that) I have set these things on in
b. *the way ( ) I have set these things on in

(4) a. a period during which the mother feeds the child (*HA 1930)
   *a period which (that) the mother feeds the child during
b. *a period ( ) the mother feeds the child during

(5) a. a matter of detail concerning which prediction is impossible (*HA 1900)
   *a matter of detail which (that) prediction is impossible concerning
b. *a matter of detail ( ) prediction is impossible concerning

(B) Prepositions + relative pronouns + to-infinitive

(1) a. a fire by which to dry my clothes (*AT 1900)
   *a fire which (that) to dry my clothes by
b. *a fire ( ) to dry my clothes by

(2) a. a nice spot in which to land (*AT 1930)
   *a nice spot which (that) to land in
b. *a nice spot ( ) to land in

(3) a. address from which to launch its restoration (*SP 1994)
   *address which (that) to launch its restoration from
b. *address ( ) to launch its restoration from

(C) Cases in which the postposed prepositions may cause ambiguity

a. Outside the door was a nylon-netted feeding ledge from which the four could gaze over the mountain and feel the wind in their feathers. (*RE 1994)

?Outside the door was a nylon-netted feeding ledge which (that) the four could gaze over the mountain and feel the wind in their feathers from.

b. ?Outside the door was a nylon-netted feeding ledge ( ) the four could gaze over the mountain and feel the wind in their feathers from.

2. Frequency as a whole

Tables 1 and 2 show the figures of all the instances of the omission (zero relative) and those of the object forms of the relatives, which, that, whom (who), with or without prepositions, which appear in restrictive relative clauses in prose in AmE and BrE from 1900 to 1994.4)

It is clear from Table 1 that in AmE the instances of the object forms have gradually decreased since 1900 and those of the omission of the rela-
tives have steadily increased. In 1900 the object forms were used in 70 percent of the instances as against approximately 30 percent of those of the zero relative, while in 1994 the instances of the zero relative account for approximately 70 percent as against approximately 30 percent of those of the object forms. In AmE, in about a hundred years the situation has been completely reversed.

Table 2 shows that in BrE too, the instances of the object forms have been on the decrease, and those of the zero relative have been on the

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Zero relative pronoun</th>
<th>(Prepositions +) Relative pronouns</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1900</td>
<td>HA 84</td>
<td>164 (30%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>AT 68</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>DI 12</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1930</td>
<td>HA 93</td>
<td>248 (39%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>AT 80</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>AM 75</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1960</td>
<td>HA 63</td>
<td>147 (55%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>AT 56</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>NE 28</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1994</td>
<td>HA 87</td>
<td>164 (69%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>RE 56</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>NE 21</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Zero relative pronoun</th>
<th>(Prepositions +) Relative pronouns</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1900</td>
<td>BL 52</td>
<td>100 (27%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>GE4 28</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>GE5 20</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1930</td>
<td>BL 81</td>
<td>117 (37%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>EN 28</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>EC 8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1960</td>
<td>BL 58</td>
<td>113 (39%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>EC 26</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>NE 29</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1994</td>
<td>SP 44</td>
<td>135 (52%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>EC 40</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>TA 51</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
increase since 1900. Interestingly enough, in 1900, both in AmE and BrE, the zero relative and the forms that are not omitted were used in much the same proportion. However, compared with that in AmE, the movement toward the omission has been relatively slow in BrE since 1900. As a result, in 1994, the zero relative and the object forms account for much the same proportion in BrE. Clearly, BrE shows itself more conservative than AmE.

The fact that the omission of the object forms has been on the increase both in AmE and in BrE may be one of the examples of the growing informalization of English, and furthermore, the fact that this tendency is especially strong in AmE seems to have something to do with the innate preference of the Americans for informal and simplified forms. In this respect, BrE is following suit, to be sure, but this seems to be largely due to the influence of AmE.

More details concerning Tables 1 and 2 will be discussed in the following.

2.1. Prepositions + relative pronouns

When prepositions are used in restrictive relative clauses, three cases are possible: (1) cases in which they are placed before the relatives, (2) those in which the relatives are not omitted and the prepositions are moved to the end of the clauses, and (3) those in which the relatives are omitted and the prepositions are moved to the end of the clauses.

Which of these forms is made the most frequent use of? The figures of each of those instances are given in Tables 3 and 4.

It is obvious from Tables 3 and 4 that, the form in which the relatives are omitted and the prepositions are postposed has increased in number in AmE and BrE, especially in AmE, although in BrE it is relatively small in

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Zero relative + deferred prepositions</th>
<th>Prepositions + relative pronouns</th>
<th>Relative Pronouns + deferred prepositions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1900</td>
<td>17 (11%)</td>
<td>117 (79%)</td>
<td>15 (10%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1930</td>
<td>13 (8%)</td>
<td>41 (84%)</td>
<td>13 (8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1960</td>
<td>19 (32%)</td>
<td>36 (61%)</td>
<td>4 (7%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1994</td>
<td>22 (42%)</td>
<td>26 (49%)</td>
<td>5 (9%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The form in which the prepositions are placed before the relatives, instances of which are most numerous, has decreased in AmE and BrE, while the form in which the relatives are not omitted and the prepositions are postposed has not shown much change in AmE since 1900, though in BrE it has slightly been on the increase.

When a preposition is postposed separated from its relative pronoun or zero relative, a certain rule seems to exist in the speaker's mind: there must be fewer words between the two as in the following.

- everything ( ) I'd ever dreamed of (RE 1994)
- physical activity that I could think of (HA 1994)

Furthermore, when the relatives are omitted, there are fewer words between the zero relative and the deferred prepositions than when the relatives are not omitted: in AmE in 1994 when the relatives are omitted, there are 3.1 words on an average between the zero relative and the postposed prepositions, as against 3.5 words when the relatives are not omitted; in BrE in 1994 when the relatives are omitted there are 2.3 words on an average between the zero relative and the deferred prepositions, as against 6.3 words when the relatives are not omitted. This is because, when the relatives are omitted, if there are too many words between the zero relative and the postposed prepositions, the meaning is more likely to be blurred than when the relatives are not omitted.

### 2.2. Which, that, whom (who)

When the object forms of the relatives are not omitted, and when the prepositions are postposed, which of the relatives is most often used in restrictive relative clauses? Table 5 gives the actual figures of the occurrences of these relatives when their antecedents are things or persons.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Zero relative + deferred prepositions</th>
<th>Prepositions + relative pronouns</th>
<th>Relative Pronouns + deferred prepositions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1900</td>
<td>5 (3.8%)</td>
<td>120 (91.6%)</td>
<td>6 (4.6%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1930</td>
<td>16 (17.4%)</td>
<td>73 (79.3%)</td>
<td>3 (3.3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1960</td>
<td>8 (10%)</td>
<td>63 (81%)</td>
<td>7 (9%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1994</td>
<td>7 (12%)</td>
<td>45 (78%)</td>
<td>6 (10%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4: BrE

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number. The form in which the prepositions are placed before the relatives, instances of which are most numerous, has decreased in AmE and BrE, while the form in which the relatives are not omitted and the prepositions are postposed has not shown much change in AmE since 1900, though in BrE it has slightly been on the increase.

When a preposition is postposed separated from its relative pronoun or zero relative, a certain rule seems to exist in the speaker's mind: there must be fewer words between the two as in the following.

- everything ( ) I'd ever dreamed of (RE 1994)
- physical activity that I could think of (HA 1994)

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2.2. Which, that, whom (who)

When the object forms of the relatives are not omitted, and when the prepositions are postposed, which of the relatives is most often used in restrictive relative clauses? Table 5 gives the actual figures of the occurrences of these relatives when their antecedents are things or persons.
Table 5 reveals a number of facts of interest in respect to *which, that, and whom (who)*, which will be discussed in the following.

### 2.2.1. Which, that

Table 5 suggests that although in AmE, of the two relatives *which* and *that*, *which* was made more frequent use of than *that* around 1900, *which* came to be used less frequently afterward. Around 1960 this tendency was reversed, and *that* began to be used more saliently. In 1994 *that* is overwhelmingly used in AmE. It, however, does not mean that *which* is not used as object at all in AmE in 1994. It simply signifies that in this survey no instance of the use of *which* used as object was found at all.

In BrE, the situation is much the same as in AmE, but the change is less drastic, or more conservative, than in AmE. In BrE around 1900 *which* was used almost predominantly, but subsequently it began to decline, and *that* came to gain power. In 1994 *that* is used slightly more often than *which*.

Then, why has *which* come to be used less often, and why has *that* come to be used more often in a restrictive relative clause? It is not very clear why this is so. It may partly be due to some grammars that advocate using *that* instead of *which* in a restrictive relative clause. As is well known, H. W. Fowler suggested in his famous passage that we use *that* in a restrictive relative clause, and *which* in nonrestrictive relative clause:

> Two kinds of relative clause, to one of which *that* and to the other of which *which* is appropriate, are the defining and nondefining; and if

### Table 5: Which, that, whom (who)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>AmE</th>
<th>BrE</th>
<th>AmE</th>
<th>BrE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1900</td>
<td>Which 129 (56%)</td>
<td>113 (84%)</td>
<td>Whom 22 (Who 1)</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>That 103 (44%)</td>
<td>22 (16%)</td>
<td>That 0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1930</td>
<td>Which 132 (60%)</td>
<td>90 (76%)</td>
<td>Whom 16 (Who 1)</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>That 88 (40%)</td>
<td>29 (24%)</td>
<td>That 3</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1960</td>
<td>Which 31 (41%)</td>
<td>53 (50.5%)</td>
<td>Whom 4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>That 45 (59%)</td>
<td>52 (49.5%)</td>
<td>That 0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1994</td>
<td>Which 0 (0%)</td>
<td>33 (43%)</td>
<td>Whom 2</td>
<td>3 (Who 1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>That 49 (100%)</td>
<td>44 (57%)</td>
<td>That 0</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
writers would agree to regard *that* as the defining relative pronoun, and *which* as the nondefining, there would be much gain both in lucidity and ease.\(^5\)

More recently, there has been a similar tendency, especially among American grammars, to recommend the use of *that* in a restrictive relative clause and *which* in a nonrestrictive one. For example, *The Washington Post Deskbook on Style* says distinctly about it:

The pronoun *that* introduces a restrictive or defining clause that cannot be omitted from the sentence without losing the meaning. *Which* introduces a nonessential or parenthetical clause, set off by commas, which could be omitted.\(^6\)

Although in a less direct way, *The New York Times Manual of Style and Usage* also advocates the use of *that* in a restrictive clause and *which* in a nonrestrictive clause: "*That* is preferred in restrictive clauses. . . . In nonrestrictive clauses, *which* is mandatory. . . ."\(^7\)

However, even if the grammars recommend the use of *that* in a relative clause, the use of *which* in a restrictive clause will not disappear completely, for, first of all, there are times when we think that even in a restrictive clause it would be better to use *which* instead of *that*. With regard to it, *The Associated Press Stylebook and Libel Manual*, which calls a restrictive relative clause "an essential clause", says:

The pronoun *which* occasionally may be substituted for *that* in the introduction of an essential clause that refers to an inanimate object or an animal without a name. In general, this use of *which* should appear only when *that* is used as a conjunction to introduce another clause in the same sentence: *He said Monday that the part of the army which suffered severe casualties needs reinforcement.*\(^8\)

The same thing can be said of the demonstrative adjective *that*. In the following examples, the first sentence that has *which* would be more appropriate than the second one.

a. I for one am impatient for that sequel which only Sir Robert Rhodes can provide. (*SP* 1994)

b. I for one am impatient for that sequel that only Sir Robert Rhodes can provide.
Besides, there are other reasons why the use of *which* in a restrictive relative clause will not disappear completely. For example, the euphony of a sentence may demand the use of *which*. Or sometimes a person’s likes or dislikes may necessitate its use. Or as Bernice Randall says, there may be people who make use of *which* for some other reasons:

Not everyone who use *that* and *which* interchangeably to introduce a restrictive relative clause does so consciously. Many people never learned the rules or, if they did, have forgotten them, are confused by them, or see no purpose in them.9)

2.2.2. Whom (who), that

As Table 5 shows, when the antecedent is personal, *that* has been little used since 1900 in AmE and BrE. *Whom* has been used a little more frequently than *that*, but its instances are exceedingly few. It clearly shows that, when the antecedent is personal, instead of using *that* or *whom (who)*, the object forms are more likely to be omitted than when the antecedent is nonpersonal. In AmE and BrE, in 1994 there are 32 instances in which the antecedent is personal, of which 24 instances (75 percent) are used with no object forms at all and only eight instances (25 percent) are used with the object forms. In AmE and BrE, in 1994, there are altogether 400 instances in which the antecedent is nonpersonal, of which 274 instances (68.5 percent) are used with no object relatives at all and 126 instances (31.5 percent) with the object forms.

Why is *whom* so unpopular? The reason for it is not very clear. Perhaps its unpopularity may derive from its being too formal, or from the speaker’s tendency to avoid choosing either *whom* or *who*. Or it may have something to do with the fact that, in the other relatives *which* and *that*, the subjective and the objective forms are the same, while in *who* and *whom*, the two forms are different. In any event, today if *whom* is used in relative clauses at all, it seems to be used in most cases with prepositions, like *with whom*, etc.

It must be added further that, when *whom* is used independently today, sometimes it seems to be used in an emphatic context. Of the four instances in AmE and BrE in 1994, two are used with such emphatic modifiers as “entirely and forever”, and “highest”:
I am divorced, and I am joined in an irregular relationship with a man whom I entirely and forever love. \textit{(HA 1994)}

A member of staff whom you have hitherto held in the highest regard calls from what seems to be a rather noisy public phone \ldots \textit{(TA 1994)}

However, this needs further studies because the instances of whom are so few after all.

3. \textbf{A few other problems}

A few other problems arise in respect to the restrictive relative clauses in which the relatives are omitted: the problem of the number of words, the problem of the subjects in the clauses, and the problem of contractions.

3.1. The number of words

Regarding the relationship of the omission of \textit{that} and the length of a relative clause, \textit{The Oxford Guide to English Usage} says:

> In formal contexts the omission of \textit{that} is best limited to relative clauses which are fairly short and which stand next to their antecedents.\textsuperscript{10}

This, however, is not accurate. What matters here is not how long a relative clause is, but how many words there are between the zero relative pronoun and the verb in a relative clause. In the following example, the relative clause is between "we" and "together", and it is fairly long, which, however, is not what matters. On the other hand, in the following instance, there are only two words between the zero relative and the verb "pay", which is what matters here.

\[
\ldots \text{welfare is the price ( ) we now pay for keeping single mothers and their children together. (HA 1994)}
\]

After examining the number of words between the relatives (or zero relative) and the verbs in AmE and BrE in 1994, the following results have been obtained. In AmE when the objects of the relative pronouns are omitted, the number of words between the zero relative and the verb is 1.7 on an average, and when the relative (\textit{that}) is not omitted, it is 2.6 on an average. In BrE when the object is omitted, the number of words between the zero relative and the verb is 2.0 on an average. When the
object *that* is not omitted, it is 3.3 on an average, and when the object *which* is not omitted, it is 4.2 on an average. In this way, although the figures are relatively high in BrE on the whole, when the object of a relative is omitted, there are fewer words between the zero relative and the verb than when the object is not omitted. This is because, as stated in 2.1 above, when the objects are omitted, if there are too many words between the zero relative and the verbs, the meaning is more likely to be ambiguous than when the objects are not omitted.

3.2. Subjects

Whether the subject in a relative clause is a pronoun or noun seems to have to do with the omission of a relative. Greenbaum and Quirk say:

> When the verb in the relative clause is *be*, the complement pronoun must be *that* or zero (*John is not the man he was*). This example illustrates one of the most favoured uses of zero: ie when the pronoun is object or complement, the subject is pronominal, and the relative clause is short.\(^{11}\)

Because this paper deals neither with the complements of the relative pronouns nor with the verb *be* in relative clauses, only the cases in which the relatives are objects and those in which the verbs are other than *be* are discussed in the following.

Table 6 shows, when the objects of the relatives are omitted, or not omitted, which part of speech is more often used as subject.

It is clearly suggested in Table 6 that, when the relatives are omitted, pronouns are used as subject more frequently than nouns: pronouns are used in approximately 80 percent of the instances in AmE and BrE in

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Rel. clauses in which the relatives are omitted</th>
<th>Rel. clauses in which the relatives are not omitted</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Subject</td>
<td>Subject</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pronouns  Nouns</td>
<td>Pronouns  Nouns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AmE</td>
<td>129 (78%) 36 (22%)</td>
<td>46 (61%) 30 (39%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BrE</td>
<td>110 (83%) 23 (17%)</td>
<td>56 (44%) 72 (56%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Nouns here include common nouns and proper nouns.)
1994. When the relatives are not omitted, pronouns are also used more frequently than nouns in AmE, but in BrE nouns are used a little more frequently than pronouns.

3.3. Contractions

Contractions are words made into one by shortening a neighboring word or two. The following are some of the contractions that appeared in the present survey:

I've been / he's brought / he'll / they don't / they didn't / I'm / we can't / they'd warned / I couldn't / they wouldn't

Contractions seem to appear more often in the relative clauses in which the objects of the relatives are omitted than in those in which they are not omitted. In AmE, in 1994 when the objects are omitted most often (69 percent), as can be seen from Table 1, there are 18 instances of contractions, as against six instances of contractions in the clauses in which the objects are not omitted. In BrE, in 1994 when the object forms of the relatives are omitted most often (52 percent), there are five instances of contractions in the clauses in which the objects are omitted, as against two instances of contractions in the clauses in which the objects are not omitted.

However, it needs to be further explored whether or not contractions have directly to do with the omission of the relatives because, first of all, as we go backward to the past, the instances become fewer and fewer. In AmE, in 1960 there are only two instances of contractions when the objects are omitted, as against one instance when the object is not omitted. In 1930 there are three instances when the objects are omitted, as against one instance when the object is not omitted. In 1900 when the object is omitted, there is no instance of a contraction and when the object is not omitted there is only one instance. The situation is much the same in BrE.

Sometimes contractions seem to depend on the magazines we use as materials. For example, no instance of a contraction can be found in *The Economist* (Apr. 23, 1994), and only one instance can be found in *The Spectator* (Apr. 23, 1994), while *Tatler* (Apr. 1994), a gossip and fashion magazine meant especially for women, contains as many as six instances of
contractions in all when the relatives are omitted and when they are not omitted. Accordingly, as the magazines become more informal, the number of contractions seems to increase. In any case, further studies are needed in this respect as well.

4. Concluding remarks

Some points of significance in this paper will be summed up as follows:

1. As a whole, it can be said that the period of about a hundred years brought a considerable change to the omission of the object forms of the relatives. In the beginning of the twentieth century, the object forms of the relative pronouns were omitted in restrictive relative clauses in prose in approximately 30 percent of the instances in both AmE and BrE. Later, the object forms came to be omitted further, and in 1994 they are omitted in approximately 70 percent of the instances in AmE as against about 50 percent in BrE. The increase in the number of the omission of the objects of the relatives may be another example of the growing informalization of English today.

2. The type of the omission of the relatives in which the prepositions are postposed has also increased in number and in 1994 it can be seen in 42 percent of all the instances of the omission of the relatives in AmE as against 12 percent in BrE.

3. When the relatives are omitted, in order to avoid ambiguity, there are fewer words between the zero relative and the postposed prepositions than when the relatives are not omitted: in AmE in 1994 when the relatives are omitted, there are 3.1 words on an average between the zero relative and the postposed prepositions, as against 3.5 words when the relatives are not omitted. In BrE in 1994 there are 2.3 words when the relatives are omitted, as against 6.3 words when the relatives are not omitted.

4. Of the two object forms *which* and *that, that* is now almost exclusively used in a restrictive relative clause in AmE. In BrE *that* is now used a little more frequently than, or nearly as frequently as, *which*. The growing use of *that* as object may partly be attributed to some grammars that advocate its use in a restrictive relative clause, and *which* in a nonrestrictive relative clause.
5. When the antecedent is personal, *that* is little used. Although *whom* is used a little more frequently than *that*, the instances are exceedingly few in 1994. Nowadays when the antecedent is personal, the objects of the relatives are more likely to be omitted: they are omitted in approximately 70 percent of the instances on an average in AmE and BrE in 1994. Although the reasons for the unpopularity of *whom* are not easily to be found, the following may be numbered among them: that *whom* is too formal, that it is a little troublesome to choose between *who* and *whom*, and that, although in the case of *which* and *that*, the subjective forms and the objective forms are the same, in the case of *who*, the two forms are different.

6. When the relatives are omitted, there are fewer words between the zero relative and the verbs in the restrictive relative clauses than when the relatives are not omitted. The number of words between the zero relative and the verb is 1.7 in AmE and 2.0 in BrE on an average in 1994.

7. When the relatives are omitted, pronouns are more often used as subject in restrictive relative clauses than nouns: when the objects are omitted, pronouns are used as subject in approximately 80 percent of the instances on an average in AmE and BrE in 1994.

8. There seem to be more contractions in the relative clauses in which the relatives are omitted than in those in which the relatives are not omitted. However, further studies need to be done to verify it.

**Notes**

1) In examining the materials in AmE, the articles that can clearly be seen to have been written by the British are left out. It is also true of BrE.


3) Quirk et al. say that when *all* is followed by a preposition and relative pronoun like the following (c), it is not acceptable. However, the examples (a) and (b) are interchangeable, and the instances like them are included here. (*Cf.* Quirk et al., *A Comprehensive Grammar of the English Language*, p. 664.)
   a. All ( ) she could talk about was her dog.
   b. All which (or that) she could talk about was her dog.
   c. *All about which she could talk was her dog.*

4) There are so many instances in this survey that I cannot say with confidence that I have counted each and every instance correctly. I may have missed one instance or two, but probably it will not influence the whole argument.


