A Note on Resumptive Pronouns

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0. Introduction

Grammarians in the Transformational Grammar explain the way of constructing relative clauses as follows: Relative clauses are usually constructed by moving a WH-operator from its base-generated position to the specifier position of an appropriate CP in the overt syntax and leaving its trace at the generated position. It is assumed that when there is no WH-element superficially, a null WH-operator is moved to the specifier position.

(1) a. I went to Yokohama with the girl who Bob loves t/*her.
    b. This the man Opi that t/*he was invited to her party.

However, sometimes a pronoun occurs at the trace position of a WH-operator.

(2) a. This the man whom Emsworth told me when he will invite him.
    b. This the man whom Emsworth made the claim that he will invite him. (Haegeman 1991: 373)

This kind of pronoun is called a ‘Resumptive Pronoun’ (henceforce, RP). There are many studies on RPs within Transformational Grammar (cf. Chomsky 1982, Epstein 1991, Shlonsky 1992). They treat RPs in some different languages and assume that only when a trace cannot be bound by its antecedent WH-operator does an RP occur which agrees with the antecedent in the \( \phi \) features: gender, person, number,
and case. If their assumption is correct, we could say that RPs occur in
the limited environments where if WH-movement leaves the trace, the
clause will be ill-formed. This may be correct so far as Present-day
written English is concerned.

RPs has been observed since OE. In OE, RPs appeared in a certain
environment, i. e. in the position next to āe.

(3) man getealde him āe nigonāe for āan heðenscripe āe hi drugon āe
hi āet an gear rixodon betwix him and Eadwine (= one reckoned
the ninth year to him for the heathenism which those did who
reigned the one year between him and Edwin)

(Anglo Saxon Chronicle E 634 (27.7); Tsukamoto (1992))

In ME, RPs took place more often than in OE. RPs occurred mainly
with that, and only sporadically with WH-elements. However, the
number of occurrences got smaller and smaller after EModE. In PrE,
RPs occur only peripherally.

If we compare RPs in the earlier English with RPs in PrE, we notice
one difference. The former can occur more freely than the latter. RPs
in OE, ME and EModE can appear where RPs in PrE cannot appear:
at the place where a trace has to appear. In this short study, I will
reexamine the RPs in the earlier English and suggest that a few oc-
currences of RPs in PrE result from the limitation of using one type of
RPs which appeared more frequently. In the next section, I will show
some examples of RPs in ME and EModE.

1. RPs in ME and EModE

As I have said, we can find more examples of RPs in LME and
EModE than in OE and in LModE. Here I will show some apparent
examples of RPs. I classify them according to their case form. First,
the nominative case:

(4) And the first that began the othe was the deuke of Can [benet],
that he wolde brynge with hym [fyve] thousand men of armys, the
which were redy on horsebakke. (Mal. Wks. 25. 26-8)
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(5) A knyght ther was, and that a worthy man, / That fro the tyme that he first bigan / to riden out, he loved chivalrie, (Ch. CT. GP., 43-5)

(6) While a wound is fresh, it is proved curable by surgery, That, if it proceed overlong, it is caused of great grievance (Mankind, 856-7)

The most frequent type of RPs is the one in which an RP takes the nominative case. Among them, the third person/singular form was observed most frequently. Second, I will look at the objective case:

(7) hit ys told us that in thys place ys a shylde that no man may bere hit aboute his necke (Mal. Wks. 877. 12-3)

(8) For this was drawyn by a knyght presoner, sir Thomas Malleorre, that God sende hym good recover. (Mal. Wks. 180. 21-3)

(9) And God thank yow for your speciall remembraunce of my mater that ye hale it so tendyrly to hert, (PL., 507/4-5)

Lastly, let us look at the genitive case:

(10) A, sir, ye ar the same knyght that I lodged onys within your castell (Mal.Wks. 356. 10-11)

(11) for many a gret chalaunge make thay to Mester John, both Measter Wodhawse, Wysman, with other dyueres pat I know not þer names, but he holdeth hys own at thay gayt no gowned of hym. (PL., 782/30-32)

All the above examples are the so-called ‘that-relative’ type. Wh-relatives could also occur with RPs but they are less frequent than the ‘that-relative’ type. When RPs appeared with WHs, they often take a genitive case form.

(12) Ys there nat a knyght in thys courte which his name ys [Gaerlon]? (Mal. Wks. 83. 22)

(13) And it is soo that I kepe a prisoner of my lordis to answer to William Greve, maryner of Gret Yermouth, the wiche he brought hym
to me by my lordis auctorité of a warand from Bell Key;

(PL., 857/3-5)

(14) To pay our wonted tribunete, from the which / We were dissuaded by our wicked queen, whom Heavens in Justice both on her and hers / Have laid most heavy hand.

(Sh., Cymb., V, v, 460-463: Abbott (1869: §249))

In Section 2, based on the above examples, I will reconsider examples of RPs in LME and EModE.

2. Analysis

In this section, I consider the difference between RPs in OE, ME and EModE, and RPs in PrE. There is one other thing that is important in considering why the difference of RPs’ distribution occurs. That is a function of RPs in the sentence.

Sano (1994) assumes that there are two types of RPs: ‘syntactic resumptive pronouns’ and ‘true resumptive pronouns’. The former is the one that behaves like WH-traces or variables and it obeys Subjacency condition\(^3\). The latter is the one that behaves like pronominals and appears where if a trace occurs, the sentence will be ill-formed. Following his assumption, I reconsider RPs in English. RPs in Present-day written English belong to ‘true resumptive pronouns’ because, as I have said, they appear at the place where a trace cannot occur. On the other hand, RPs in OE, ME and EModE are divided into two types: syntactic ones and true ones. All examples of RPs in the nominative and the objective case may be syntactic ones. They behave like WH-traces. If a trace appears, their acceptability would not differ from one of clauses containing RPs. RPs in the genitive case are true ones. Consider (15) and (16):

(15) a. Beth parted tearfully from the boy whose name \(i\) I cannot remember \(i\).
    b. *Beth parted tearfully from the boy whose \(i\) I cannot remember \(i\) name.
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(16) a. *A boy Op_i name that t_i was Billy was killed in a railway accident.
    b. *A boy Op_i that t_i name was Billy was killed in a railway accident.

In English, overt WHs in the genitive case only cannot be moved, i.e. without its dependent, and null WH-operator (in the genitive case?) cannot be moved anywhere. RPs in the genitive case are used to save an otherwise illegitimate sentence. Therefore, RPs in the genitive case are true resumptive pronouns.

3. Conclusion

We have seen in this short study that a few occurrences of RPs in Present written English result from the limitation of using syntactic resumptive pronouns which was used freely in the earlier English. In OE, ME and EModE, both types could occur freely but in PrE, syntactic ones and true ones are mostly limited to Spoken English. In Spoken English, syntactic ones cannot occur as often as they could. As to the question why the limitation above mentioned occurs, the future studies are awaited.

ABBREVIATIONS

Ch. CT. GP. Chaucer, The Canterbury Tales, General Prologue.
PL. Paston Letters.
Sh., Cymb. Shakespeare, Cymbeline.
NOTES

1. Nakajima (1979) and Kroch (1981) show examples of RPs in colloquial speech:
   i) There was a woman that I couldn’t recall her name.  
      (Nakajima 1979: 217)
   ii) a. He’s very good at those gold leaf letters that you put them on from the inside.
       b. It was John H., who I’ve heard of him.  
       (Kroch (1981))

2. Examples of this type are interpretable as appositive. It is possible that they are related to the following type of clauses.
   i) Tulli, who next vnto Plato excelled all other in vertue and eloquence.  
      (Elyot, The Defence of Good Women 14; Ryden 1966: 5)
   ii) a sone named Gissippus, who nat onely was equall to the said yonge Titus in yeres, but also in stature.  
      (Elyot, Governor, II, 134; Ryden 1966: 5)

3. Sano suggests from his data in Nchufie that the reason why this type of RPs occur is to save the violation of ECP. But we cannot follow his suggestion when we consider RPs in the history of English. I might say that, at least, one reason is stylistic because we can find more examples in literary works than in others.

REFERENCES

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**TEXTS**


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