

# 『接触節』と『関係詞の省略』について

——理論と実践の間——

On “Contact-Clause” and “Omission of the Relative”  
——Between the theory and the practice——

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(1982年11月30日 受理)

## I. Introduction

In this treatise I am going to refer to the theoretical difference between “Contact-Clause” and “Omission of the Relative” and then the problem between the theory and the practice in English grammar.

In many complex sentences we find the dependent clauses led by relatives or without relatives.

O. Jespersen calls the dependent clause without relatives “Contact-Clause”.

C.T. Onions and some other grammarians assert that such dependent clauses without relatives should be considered “Omission of the Relative”.

By comparing both I would like to indicate some main grammatical points.

I think that this is not only the difference of grammatical terms but the difference between the methods in teaching English Grammar.

C.T. Onions admits the grammatical rule that the objective case of the relative pronoun is omissible but O. Jespersen does not approve of this rule. O. Jespersen explains his theory by quoting many examples, and G.O. Curme is supporting Jespersen's theory on one hand and is declaring his own theory on the other hand.

As for myself such grammatical theories are problematic, but when we teach our students the usage of relative pronoun it is very significant which standpoint we should adopt, “Contact-Clause” or “Omission of the Relative”. I think it is the problem between the theory and the practice in teaching English grammar.

Generally speaking, the omission of relative pronoun is widely understood when the relative pronoun is used as the objective case, but it is not always theoretical.

So, even if it is not correct in theory, it is easier for students to understand that the objective case of relative pronoun can be omitted.

In the following treatise I am going to introduce the outline of “Contact-Clause”, “Asyndetic Relative Construction” and “Omission of the Relative” etc.

Before introducing the outline of “Contact-Clause” I must refer to the usage or function of modifier. Because I think that the relative pronoun is a kind of attributive adjective modifier.

According to G.O.Curme, the attributive adjective is explained in the following manner:

‘The attributive adjective stands either before or after its governing noun; in the former position called adherent, in the latter position apposition adjective.’ (Syntax)

The relative clause is an adjective clause and in the complex sentence the relative clause works as a modifier, too.

Usually the modifier stands before the modified word and at the same time it can stand after the modified word.

One widespread religious custom in the United States

In the above statement, the underlined words are modifiers, but the modifiers, one, widespread and religious stand before the modified word (=custom) but the bodifier (=in the United tates) stands after the modified word (=custom).

So we can say that there are two ways of modifiers ie. prepositive, and postpositive.

The Postposition of modifier is as follows:

1. When Adjective stands after Noun.

She alone could solve the problem.

The people present agreed to this project.

It's the most absurd idea conceivable.

2. When Phrase led by Present Participle or Past Participle modifies Noun

I was conscious of a light burning in the kitchen.

Here are apples picked by the children.

3. When Adjective stands after Indefinite Pronoun

Did you give him anything good?

Everything old-fashioned and troublesome seemed to have passed away.

There was nothing interesting in the newspaper.

The boy had something nice to show us.

4. When Infinitive or Phrase led by it modifies Noun

He has nothing to do today.

We don't like to do anything to hurt her feeling.

There are several good points to be considered.

5. When Noun or Pronoun is modified by 'Adjective+Infinitive'

We should find for him something different to read.

I will tell him something interesting to hear.

This is a problem necessary to be discussed.

6. When Pronoun modifies Noun

The teacher herself composed the music.

The thing itself was not valuable, but I bought it as a keepsake.

7. When Adjective Phrase modifies Noun

I want some tea, hot and strong.

People, rich and poor, young and old, gathered together in the public square.

National feelings against Japan were...bitter in the Philippines than in any other country.

The fresh air in the woods revived me.

## II. "Contact-Clause"

"Contact-Clause" is the term used by O.Jespersen. The usage or function of "Contact-Clause" is as follows;

- '(1) Contact-Clauses are most frequent in those cases in which the pronoun, if present, would have been the object:

The seed ye sow, another reaps;

The wealth ye find, another keeps.

It was all he could do to keep from screaming.

- (2) Very frequently also the relative pronoun, if expressed, would have been the object of a preposition (which is placed after the verb):

You are not the first I have said no to.

What is it he is staring at?

The family he lived with simply adored him.

- (3) The relative pronoun would have been the predicative:

I am not the man I was when you knew me first.

She speaks like the eccentric woman she is.

(I am not the madman you thought me.)

- (4) The pronoun would have been the subject; this is not common nowadays except in some well-defined instances, chiefly after 'it is, there is (are), here is (are)':

It isn't every boy gets an open chance like that.

It wasn't I left him in.

I wonder who it was defined man as a rational animal.

There is a man below wants to speak to you.

- (5) Contact-Clauses beginning with 'there is' are pretty frequent:

She taught me the difference there is between what is right and what is wrong.

As if I could write a better book than any there has been in this country for generations.

- (6) We finally come to cases in which the relative pronoun, had it been expressed, would have been a tertiary:

The moment he entered the room, I felt myself prejudiced against him.

By the time I had told my mother they had left.

Dolly was looking up at Archie in the way they do, you know.'

(Modern English Grammar)

The outline of "Contact-Clause is as follows;

' In sentences like the following,

He has found the key you lost yesterday,

This is the boy we spoke of,

There is a man below wants to speak to you,

we have a phenomenon which plays a very prominent part in MnE and requires a full treatment here. The clauses "you lost yesterday", "we spoke of", and "wants to speak to you" have no independent existence, they are adjuncts to "the key", "the boy", and "a man below" and must be termed relative clauses, exactly as those synonymous clauses which we should have had, if the relative word that (or which, who) had been inserted before "you", "we", and "wants".

These clauses are here termed contact-clauses, because what characterizes them is the close contact between the antecedent and the clause. No pause is possible before the beginning of the clause, and the words "the key", "the boy", and "a man below" are felt to be just as intimately connected with what follows as with what precedes them. The close connexion is, perhaps, felt even more strongly in cases like "The key you lost yesterday has now been found in the garden", where the main verb comes after the whole clause. It is customary in these cases to say that the relative pronoun who (whom) or which is "understood" or "omitted", and the clauses are called elliptic. But here as so often in grammatical disquisitions these terms really explain nothing. I very much doubt whether anyone without any grammatical training would think that anything is left out in the sentences mentioned above. If we speak here of "omission" or "subaudition" or "ellipsis", the reader is apt to get the false impression that the fuller expression is the better one as being complete, and that the shorter expression is to some extent faulty or defective, or something that has come into existence in recent times out of slovenliness. This is wrong; the constructions are very old in the language, and have not come into existence through the dropping of a necessary relative pronoun. (Modern English Grammar) Next we can find the following explanation in his book.

' Relative clauses without any connecting word are here called 'contact-clauses' because what characterizes them is the close contact in sound and sense between the clause and what precedes it: in sentences like "this is the boy we spoke of" and "he falls in love with all the girls he sees," the words "the boy" and "all the girls" are felt to be just as intimately connected with what follows as with what precedes them. No pause is possible before a contact-clause. Contact-clauses are very old in the language and have for centuries been extremely frequent in speech as well as in all kinds of literature, except in translations which tend to reproduce foreign idioms. The construction is hardly found at all in the Bible, while examples abound in Shakespeare and most good writers, although Dr Johnson and some of his followers avoided it as "a colloquial barbarism". Contact-clauses are always restrictive.' (Essentials of English Grammar)

### III. Asyndetic Relative Construction

G.O.Curme uses the term 'Attributive Adjective Clause'. This clause has the force of an attributive adjective. He uses the expression "Asyndetic Relative Construction" instead of "Contact-clause" used by O.Jespersen.

'A. Classification: There are two classes:

1. *Asyndetic Relative Clause*. There is an old type of relative clause, which follows the antecedent, like other relative clauses, but is not linked to it by a relative pronoun, so that we often say that the relative pronoun is omitted and call the clause *asyndetic*, i.e. without a connective: Here is the book *you lent me*.

In fact, however, such clauses are not without a connective. In this sentence the definite article before book is a determinative, i.e. a demonstrative adjective that points to following explanatory clause. Thus the determinative *the* stands in the principal proposition and points, like an index finger, to the following relative clause, binding it to the principal proposition.

We also use *this (one), these, that (one), those, the one(s)* as determinatives: this book and that one *you hold in your hand*: this book and that pen *you have*; these books and those *you have*; this book and the one *you hold in your hand*.

In all these cases the determinatives are definite, but there are also a large number of indefinite determinatives: *a, any, which, whichever, what* (more indefinite than *which*), *whatever* (more indefinite than *whichever*), *every, each, all, etc.*: this book and any other *you select*; every book *I have*; whatever course *you take*.

If we desire to use a preposition, we place it at the end of the clause: This is the pen *I write with[it]*. There is often as here a personal pronoun suppressed, which brings the preposition into the last place. The close connection in thought with the preceding antecedent suggests the meaning, so that we are not conscious of an omission.

If we should insert a relative pronoun in any of the above examples, it would be in the accusative. But the dative relation is also common, the prepositional dative sign *to* or *for* standing at the end of the clause after the analogy of true prepositions: the man *I gave it to*; the boy *I told the story to*. The nominative relation, though common here in older English, is now in general avoided as unclear, but in many expressions where the situation makes the thought clear it is still common: I lent Mrs. Jones what butter *there was in the house*. My children have had every complaint *there is to be had*. There isn't one of us *really knows* (W.D.Howells). There is a man at the door *wants to see you*.

The asyndetic construction is still often used instead of employing *where, where, when, why*: This is the place we met yesterday. He was quite sick the day I visited him. That is the reason I did it. Often also to express manner: That is the way I do it.

The usual custom of saying that the relative pronoun is omitted, suggests careless-

ness and has brought this construction into bad repute with many who are wont to attach value to form. A careful study of the true nature of this favorite old construction will show at once that it is a good natural English expression, not a mutilated grammatical member, but perfect and neatly fitted into the structure of the sentence, performing its function tersely, yet clearly and forcefully, often even with elegant simplicity.

2. *Relative Clause with Expressed Relative.* We now have a number of relative pronouns, but they are developments out of old determinatives, so that our present relative clause with an expressed relative pronoun is historically related to the old determinative type described in I above.

In the concrete expression of older English, there was often not only a determinative before the antecedent but also another after it to make the reference doubly clear: "Here is *the* book you lent me", or with a double determinative "Here is *the* book *that* you lent me," the two determinatives *the* and *that* pointing as with two index fingers to the following explanatory clause *you lent me*.

Later, *that* developed into a relative pronoun, pointing not forward, but backward, linking the relative clause to the antecedent. But features of its former nature still cling to that. It cannot take a preposition before it, but the preposition still stands at the end of the clause, as in the old determinative construction: This is the pen *that* I write *with*.' (English Grammar)

G.O.Curme is a negative supporter for Jespersen's theory, not a positive one, I think. So he says 'Asyndetic Relative Construction' without using the term 'Contact-Clause' by O.Jespersen.

'There is in English fairly well preserved the most primitive type of relative construction, the asyndetic relative clause, i.e., a clause without a connective, without a formal link joining the clause to the governing noun. In a strict sense this is not a relative clause since it does not contain a word which points back to an antecedent. It simply lies alongside of it as an appositive clause explaining it. The usual custom of saying that the relative is omitted suggests carelessness and has in fact brought the construction into bad repute with many who are wont to attach value to form. A careful study, however, of the true nature of this favorite old construction,.....will show at once that it is a good natural English expression, not a mutilated grammatical member but perfect and neatly fitted into the structure of the sentence, performing its function tersely, yet clearly and forcefully, often even with elegant simplicity.' (Syntax)

According to G.O.Curme the function of the relative pronoun is as follows;

They (=Relative Pronouns) not only perform the function of a pronoun, referring back to the antecedent noun or pronoun, but they have also the function of a conjunction, i.e. they have conjunctive force, linking the subordinate clause to the principal clause.

- ・ He makes no friend who never made a foe.
- ・ I have read the book which you lent me.
- ・ I met a man that I knew.
- ・ I had the same trouble as you had.

(Parts of Speech and Accidence)

#### IV. Omission of the Relative

Omission of the relative pronoun, especially that of the objective case in the relative pronoun is often found in the sentence. The representative grammarians are C. Onions and W.S. Allen, etc.

C. Onions' theory is as follows:

'In modern English prose the Relative pronoun is omitted, generally speaking, only when it is the Object of the Clause.

In the spoken language the tendency is to omit the Relative as much as possible, and to prefer (e.g.) 'the book I am reading' to 'the book that I am reading.' In the written language its omission is often felt to be undignified.

But the Relative is also omitted when it is the Subject of its Clause:

(i) in colloquial language, after there is, it is, who is?:

There was a woman called this afternoon.

There's somebody at the door wants to see you.

It's an ill wind blows nobody good.

Who is that called just now? (This avoids saying 'that that', or 'that who'.)

(ii) in poetry and the older language, without restriction:

What words are these have fallen from me?.....Tennyson.

I know a charm shall make thee meek and tame.....Shelly.

These Londoners have got a gibberish with them would confound a gipsy.

.....Sheridan.'

(An Advanced English Syntax)

W.S. Allen uses the term 'Non-defining relatives' in this case.

'This kind of relative is not very common in speech, but occurs quite frequently in the written languages. The reason is that speech prefers simple sentences, and the *non-defining* relative is a deliberate inclusion of unnecessary decoration within the sentence. It has already been shown that the very common and very important *defining* relative is so much an integral part of the ideas to be expressed, that no pause is wanted before it, and even the conjunction "that" is dropped. The *non-defining* relative is a mere parenthesis, a casual aside or reminder to the listener or reader.'

(Living English Structure)

L. Tipping's explanations are these;

'The Relative Pronoun, or the Relative Adverb, joining an Adjective Clause to the rest of the sentence is often omitted;

That's the watch (that) he gave me.

The day (when) he comes back will be a happy one.

The reason (why) I do this is to make matters clear.'

(L. Tipping: Matriculation English Grammar)

In the above description I introduced two typical theories about the dependent clause without relative. The former is represented by O.Jespersen and the latter is represented by C.T. Onions. I think that the former is consistent and logical but that the latter is general but practical.

In school grammar we teach our students the clause without relative as omission of the relative. Because the grammatical rule that the objective case of relative pronoun is omissible is shown them as the aid to understand the use of relative pronoun.

I think that it is rather difficult for Japanese to understand "Contact-Clause" theoretically.

It is the most important thing for us to have a good knowledge of English grammar and to put it into practice.

I think that the problem between 'Contact-Clause' and 'Omission of the Relative' is one of the well-known problems between the theoretical grammar and the practical grammar.

It is desirable for us to study English grammar not only theoretically but practically and to establish something in common between the theoretical grammar and the practical grammar. This only will solve the difficulty between both the theory and do practice.

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