

ANNA
BOROZDINA

DELTA
A MODULE OF
SUCCESSFUL LSAs

LSA 1
Language Systems: Grammar
Helping Learners Master Relative Clauses

Candidate Name

Centre Number

Date

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1. Introduction

1.1 Why focus on relative clauses in complex sentences?

Particular problems for learners whose 1st language is not closely related to English are generally caused by complex sentences and these problems relate to comprehension as well as production (M. Parrott, 2010). And long before we expect learners to use relative clauses, we can help them recognize and understand this grammar pattern by drawing learners' attention to where they are used in real conversation and texts. I hope to discover through this assignment how I can help my learners with "identification" of relative clauses in conversations and real-life situations.

1.2. Scope

I will explore how learners can use different types of relative clauses: defining and non-defining as well as relative pronouns (who, whose, which; that vs which and who) and adverbs (when, why, where) (Wallwork, 2013).

2. Analysis

2.1. Grammatical Form

2.1.1. Relative Clauses in Complex Sentences

To make a relative clause, two propositions are combined: e.g. *Some people talk too much. They annoy me.* One is taken and turned into a subordinate clause, then attached to the noun. For this process to occur, the two sentences must share the same referent.

Defining Relative Clauses (restrictive/identifying)	Non-defining Relative Clauses (non-restrictive/non-identifying)
<ul style="list-style-type: none">People <u>who talk too much</u> annoy me immensely. <p>Subject [relative pronoun+ relative clause] predicate object adverb.</p> <p>Relative clause is in the middle of the complex sentence, no commas are used.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">She is the bravest girl <u>that I know</u>. <p>Main clause [that (relative pronoun) + D clause].</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Sarah Jones, whom I knew at university, is a doctor now. <p>Subject COMMA relative pronoun + subordinate clause COMMA predicate object adverb.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">My friend Peter, who has just moved to London, sent me a letter. <p>Main clause, [who + ND clause], main clause.</p>

Complex sentences with relative clauses can also be negative and interrogative and are formed according to rules of asking questions (with the help of auxiliary verb or question word) and making negative sentences (auxiliary + not).

Did you see that man who we met on holiday last summer?

I don't like my new neighbor who is always playing the drums at night.

2.2. Phonological form

2.2.1. Stress

The main aim when working with pronunciation is to enable learners to achieve 'comfortable intelligibility'. This means that they can be understood comfortably, without undue effort by the listener, and that they can understand comfortably the speech of native and non-native speakers without undue effort on their own part (A. Underhill, 1994: 171). Many languages seem to exhibit very similar use of stress but it is not possible in the present state of our knowledge to say whether there are universal tendencies in all languages to position sentence stress in predictable ways (P. Roach, 2009).

'That' will be unstressed and ND clauses will include a pause where the commas are and a downward intonation contour when the extra information is added.

Here's the **book** that I **found** last **week**.

My cousin **James**, who has just come back from America, **brought** me a new **laptop**.

The **bride**, whose wedding dress was designed by Valentino, **looked stunning**. The **best** time to **visit** the **island** is in **May**, when it's not too crowded.

2.3. Meaning

2.3.1. Relative Clauses

Relative clauses give additional information about something without starting another sentence. By combining sentences with a relative clause, the text becomes more fluent and learners can avoid repeating certain words.

*A boy is talking to Sarah. Do you know the boy? Do you know the boy **who** is talking to Sarah?*

A relative clause which includes a passive verb is often "reduced" (M. Parrott, 2010). Both *the relative pronoun* and the verb *to be* are left out.

They produced various plans [] drafted by different consultants. ([which had been] drafted...)

Relative clauses are introduced by **relative pronouns** which are always related to some noun or pronoun in the main clause and they perform certain functions:

- Join the main and subordinate clauses together;
- Are used as subjects, objects or attributes of subordinate clauses;

*I picked up the letter **which** was on the window-sill. (subject)*

*I do not know the girl **whose** book was used by the teacher. (attributive)*

I have no idea **what** he is going to do. (object)

Relative pronoun	Use	Example
who	subject or object pronoun for people	I told you about the man <i>who</i> owns this restaurant.
which	subject or object pronoun for animals and things	Do you see the dog <i>which</i> is lying in the garden?
which	referring to a whole sentence	He couldn't write <i>which</i> surprised me.
whose	possession for people, animals and things	Do you know the girl <i>whose</i> grandfather is a lawyer?
whom	object pronoun for people, especially in non-defining relative clauses (in defining relative clauses we colloquially prefer <i>who</i>)	I was invited by the professor <i>whom</i> I met at the conference.
that	subject or object pronoun for people, animals and things in defining relative clauses (<i>who</i> or <i>which</i> are also possible)	I don't like the sofa <i>that</i> stands in the living room.

Subject and object pronouns cannot be distinguished by their forms - who, which, that are used for both subject and object pronouns. If the relative pronoun is followed by a verb, the relative pronoun is a *subject pronoun*. Subject pronouns must always be used (J. Scrivener, 2008).

*the apple **which/that** is lying on the table*

If the relative pronoun is not followed by a verb (but by a noun or pronoun), the relative pronoun is an *object pronoun*. Object pronouns can be omitted in defining relative clauses, which are then called *Contact Clauses* (Oxford Dictionary).

*the apple (**which/that**) Tom laid on the table*

Additionally, **relative clauses** are introduced by **relative adverbs** which can be used instead of a relative pronoun plus preposition. This often makes the sentence easier to understand.

This is the shop **in which** I bought my bike. → This is the shop **where** I bought my bike.

When	In/on which	Refers to a time expression	The day when we met our friend
Where	In/at which	Refers to a place	The place where we saw this car
why	For which	Refers to a reason	The reason why they did it

2.3.2. Defining Relative Clauses

Defining relative clauses (also called *identifying relative clauses* or *restrictive relative clauses* (O. Jespersen, 2007) give necessary information and are essential to the meaning of the main clause. The clause is not put in commas. *Who*, *which* or *that* can be omitted when they are the object of the relative clause.

*He's the actor **who** was killed in a car crash. ("Who" as subject is not omitted.)*

*That's the letter (**which/that**) Sally sent me. ("Which/that" as object can be omitted.)*

2.3.3. Non-defining relative Clauses

According to the Oxford Guide to English Grammar, a non-defining relative clause or adding clause adds extra information and it is not essential to the meaning of the main sentence. Nondefining RCs are formal and typical of written English.

Einstein, *who failed his university entrance exam*, discovered relativity.

Non-defining clauses use relative pronouns, just as defining clauses do. The only difference is that the relative pronoun "that" cannot be used instead of "who" and "which" with a nondefining clause.

The adding clause is separated from the main clause usually with commas. Also dashes and brackets can be used. There are often adding clauses in informative texts. They are rather formal and typical of a written style. (J. Eastwood, 1994: 369)

The new manager is nicer than the old one – whom the staff disliked.

The cat, whose name was Molly, was sitting on the window-sill.

2.4. Use

Relative clauses are important when making definitions and therefore useful when teaching science-based CLIL (Content and Language Integrated Learning).

An asteroid is as small celestial body that/which moves around the sun.

An atom is the smallest amount of substance that can take part in a chemical reaction.

3. Problems and Solutions Problem: Knowing the difference between defining (D) and non-defining (ND) relative clauses

Higher level learners may have difficulties while doing the tasks on D and ND relative clauses. They may use relative clauses in speaking practice but when the task is to state what kind of clause it is, some problems may occur. They may be confused because every student thinks that all the information in a sentence is important as it is already there.

Solution

To help learners with this issue, I would use examples, written on the whiteboard and fill in the appropriate relative pronoun task with stating D and ND relative clauses (appendix 1).

- A pair of sentences is on the white board:

1(a) The students who arrived late couldn't get in.

1(b) The students, who arrived late, couldn't get in. (J. Scrivener, 2008:274)

- Ask the class: What is the difference in meaning? And let them engage in lots of discussion. They may think that the sentences are identical at first.
- If students cannot answer, I will help them by describing a situation. In 1 (a) only SOME of the students couldn't get in. Which ones? The ones who arrived late. This is a defining clause. In 1 (b) ALL of the students couldn't get in. The fact they arrived late is extra non-crucial information. This is non-defining clause.
- CCQs may also help. For instance, I may use the second pair of sentences to find out whether learners got the meaning. (About my family – personalized example)

My sister, who lives in Australia, is a ballet dancer. (How many sisters do I have? - One)

My sister who lives in Australia is a ballet dancer. (How many sisters do I have? – More than one. Do they all live in Australia? – No, only the one who is a ballet dancer.)

- Next stage students are given the task, time to complete it individually, then feedback of the whole group.

These examples, CCQs and the task itself helps deal with problem of misunderstanding and misinterpreting D and ND relative clauses. Moreover, if I use a personal example, it may help students remember a situation and context for this grammatical pattern. This exercise may also be used with lower level students but only to fill in the right relative pronoun.

3.2. Problem: Missing out the relative pronoun

Lower level learners who have just started learning relative clauses may find it difficult to understand where they can omit a relative pronoun in a complex sentence (J. Scrivener:271). They need it to sound more natural while conducting speaking or writing activities.

Learners have difficulties in using relative pronouns when they want to define the preceding noun in order to differentiate it from another noun or to add extra information.

Solution

To help learners determine where to skip the relative pronoun or not I would give them a task (appendix 2) with simple sentences. They will need to combine them in complex sentences and decide where there is a chance to omit the relative pronoun.

- Before setting the task, I would put examples on the board or give learners handouts with examples and pictures related to the sentence to make them interested

- a) *Finally, John found the woman (that) he was looking for. That can be omitted.*
- b) *Finally, John found the woman that had the keys.*

I may elicit the meaning by asking CCQs. For instance: in sentence A, what is the subject to the verb *was looking for*? *John or the woman? – John!*

It means that John (not the woman) was doing the action of looking and *that* can be omitted.

- Students do the task (write 1 complex sentence, using 2 simple sentences and relative pronouns where necessary)

They do it individually, check with the partner and then the feedback to the whole group. If there are still any question, I would use extra examples or may ask students to create their own. This activity can be adapted to different levels, for higher level students the vast range of topics and vocabulary might be used.

3.3. Problem: Avoidance of relative clauses

Both lower and higher level students may find sentences with relative clauses quite long and cumbersome to construct (and therefore avoid them) (J. Scrivener, 2008:272).

Instead they may operate with simple sentences or even phrases just to achieve a communicative aim.

Solution

Penny Ur (1988:271) outlines an exercise ‘elaborating a story’ using relative clauses both D and ND. For Ukrainian students, it would not be difficult as the same kind of exercise is done in Ukrainian classes.

- Students are divided into 2 or 3 teams (it depends on the number of students in the group)
- They are given a story (appendix 3) which they need to rewrite using relative clauses.
- They are provided with the first example and a time limit
- After they complete the task, they present their story; other students and a teacher listen to it. While listening, a teacher marks on the whiteboard a number of sentences with relative clauses (if there are 2 teams, for instance, it may be possible to write clauses on the whiteboard dividing it into 2 parts). This task may work on different levels as the topic chosen and the creativity of the task makes the lesson more fun.

3.4. Problem: Intonation in sentences with relative clauses

Lower level learners while pronouncing a sentence are usually concentrated on pronunciation of separate sounds correctly and forget about the intonation in general. They may sound unintelligible; thus, the fluency suffers.

Students may stress relative pronouns and adverbs to show that they have chosen them right and forget about the rule (see 2.2.1.).

Her **house**, which she bought several years ago, is **nice** and **cozy**.

We **want to go** to the **park** where we met that **odd** lady.

French and English systems of word stress and rhythm are very different and this can lead to serious difficulties in understanding and in producing spoken English (Swan and Smith, 2001).

Solution

As there are three main patterns of intonation in English (falling, rising and fall-rise) students may listen to the recording of a text or separate sentences with relative clauses and try to understand which words are stressed.

I would give students handouts with separate sentences (appendix 4) with relative clauses and ask students to listen to them and during the feedback ask them to pronounce the sentence using intonation they have just heard. It may help learners distinguish meaning and have the right pitch range (S. Thornburry, 1997)

In this situation drilling will help to establish the right intonation. For instance, make pauses where necessary to convey the meaning.

*Tony, <pause> who had been granted leave, <pause> was **home** for **several weeks**.*

3.5. Problem: Punctuation in sentences with relative clauses

Commas before or after relative clauses may puzzle students because, for instance, of L1 interference.

Solution

Students are given handouts with the task 'missing punctuation' (appendix 5). There may be a range of sentences with relative clauses. Students have to decide where to put commas. During the feedback a teacher elicits the form:

- Main clause + NO COMMA + subordinate clause
- Subordinate clause + COMMA + main clause
- Defining clauses are NEVER put in COMMAS. Non-defining clauses are ALWAYS put in COMMAS.

This activity helps focus on punctuation and use it more consciously in writing. It will be productive for lower level learners as higher level students might find it easy (depending on their grammatical awareness). The task for them would be to firstly state whether a clause is defining or non-defining and then put commas where necessary.

4. Conclusion

My research indicates that relative clauses in English seem to be both easy and tricky. They provoke thinking and cause difficulties while learning, thus, with the help of numerous methods, approaches and tasks we need to figure out ways to explain grammar to EFL learners, so that it may become one of the most favorite aspects of learning one day.

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6. Appendices:

Appendix 1

Task 1. Fill in the relative pronouns **who, which, whose** and **that**. Write (D) for defining, (ND) for non-defining relative clauses. Add commas where necessary.

1. That's the film _____ I was talking about. _____
2. The Star stadium _____ has been renovated is reopening tomorrow. _____
3. David Beckham _____ played for United has moved to America. _____
4. This film _____ is based on a true story is fantastic. _____
5. I know few sportsmen _____ play as well as he does. _____
6. My team _____ which didn't do well this year needs better players. _____
7. The cinema in _____ we saw "Pirates of the Caribbean" has one of the best sound systems. _____
8. The ring _____ I bought in Paris is very expensive. _____
9. My neighbor _____ son plays the drums is finally moving house. _____ 10.
The police are looking for the man _____ fingerprints they found on the gun. _____

Appendix 2

Task 2. Make sentences as in the example. Use relative pronouns or relative adverbs. State if the relatives can be omitted or not.

e.g. John works for a company. The company manufactures cars.

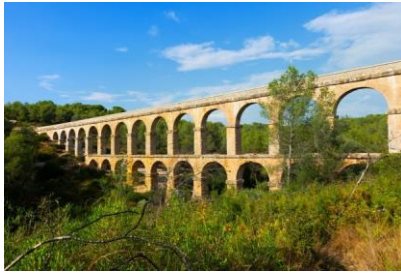
John works for a company which manufactures cars. (*which* – cannot be omitted)

1. The girl looks just like my sister. I met her on the bus.
2. Mr. Brown comes from France. He is a French teacher.
3. John moved to Paris. His father is a lawyer.
4. The bakery sells wonderful pies. It is by my house.
5. The café has closed down. I first met my husband there.
6. The sports centre is very expensive. We play tennis.
7. The summer was very hot. I went to Spain.
8. Simon doesn't eat meat. His mother is a vegetarian.

Appendix 3

Task 3. Use relative clauses to complete a fairy tale.

*Tarragona, which was founded before the 5th century BC, is a port city located in the northeast of Spain.



Tarragona forest with a Roman bridge



Tarragona (city)

Once upon a time there was a fairy₁. She was friends with a girl₂. They met in a forest in Tarragona₃ near a house₄.

One afternoon in winter₅ the child₆ got lost. She started to cry near a lake₇.

The fairy₈ appeared at the lake₉ and took her home₁₀.

who which where when whose

1. who was wise and beautiful
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.
- 8.
- 9.
- 10.

possible answers:

1. who was wise and beautiful
2. whose parents were very busy
3. where the girl liked to play
4. which was abandoned
5. when it was very cold
6. who didn't go to school
7. which turned into silver
8. who was worried about the girl
9. where the girl was waiting and feeling sad
10. which wasn't very far away

Appendix 4

Task 4 Pronounce the sentences using the intonation pattern you have just heard.

1. The Coca-Cola Company, which was founded in 1892, is famous all over the world.
2. The company, which produced a lot of soft drinks, is based in Atlanta.
3. John S. Pemberton, who invented Coca-Cola, intended the drink to be used as a cure for common illnesses.
4. Frank Robinson, who worked for John Pemberton, chose the name 'Coca-Cola'.
5. Fanta, which was originally produced by Germany, was bought by the Coca-Cola Company.
6. Sprite, which was introduced in 1961, is also made by Coca-Cola Company.
7. In America, where Cola was first produced, there is a large soft drink industry, but the Coca-Cola Company is the most successful.

Appendix 5

Task 5 Put commas where necessary. Mark the sentences DC or NDC. Explain your choice.

1. The Prime Minister who is the head of the government is formally appointed by the President.
2. Chemistry is the subject which I always had problems with.
3. The boy who broke the window said he was sorry.
4. Mr. Bond who owns the company is a wealthy businessman.
5. The girl you were talking to is my niece.
6. The suit that/which I bought last week doesn't fit me.
7. People who commit crimes should be punished.
8. Adam brought his favourite antique book which he had found at a flea market.
9. Many people were hurt in the explosion several of whom were standing a hundred meters away.
10. The players who were involved in the fight were sent off the pitch.

Helping Learners Better Understand News Items

LSA2: Listening

Candidate Name

Centre Number

Date

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Word count: 2494

1. Introduction

Why focus on listening to news features?

We learn to listen and we listen to learn. Learners with different backgrounds and L1s, both French and Ukrainian, have the same listening purposes: information-gathering, assessment, criticism, empathy and pleasure (J.J. Wilson, 2008). Students are daily exposed to masses of information they need to process in order to study, progress and enrich their lives. Listening skills are necessary for my students to hold conversations face-to-face and over the phone, attend meetings and listen to the news which, in particular, helps them find out useful information concerning a range of topics: technologies, politics, environment, education and social issues.

1.2. Scope

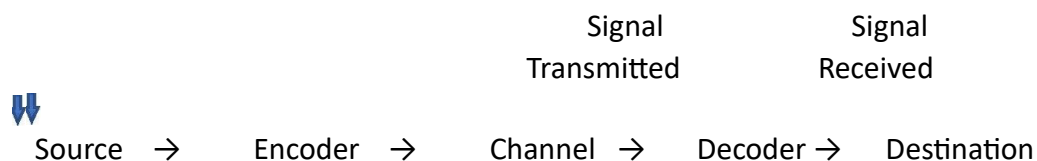
I will explore how my learners can use the information gained from news broadcasts by systematically presenting listening for main ideas, listening for details and making inferences thereby helping students develop a sense of why they listen and which skill to use to listen better (S. Brown, 2006).

2. Analysis of Features Bottom-up vs Top-down Approaches to Listening

A teacher wants their students to know how to listen no matter what subject area and age they teach. Researchers have identified two models to describe the listening process: top-down and bottom-up listening (J.J. Wilson, 2008).

The Bottom-up model, developed by researchers working in 1940s and 1950s, focuses on listening for details and involves tasks that focus on understanding at a sound or word level (phonemes and syllables) to lead learners towards meaning. Tasks are 'intensive', as they focus on listening for particular details.

e.g. A person is about to travel by car to a friend's house. His/her friend gives this person directions over the phone. In this scenario, the person listens for specific details in order to find the way and the functional language and vocabulary of giving directions are important. Bottom-up models of text processing follow a traditional view of communication as the transmission of information (Flowerdew and Miller, 2005).



According to this model, the sender encodes a message, which passes along the communication channel in the form of a signal and is then decoded by the receiver. Provided that there is no deficiency in the channel and that both the sender and the receiver are using the same code, successful communication is guaranteed. Accordingly, communication can take place without any reference to the speaker, hearer, or wider context (Flowerdew and Miller, 2005:25). For instance, this bottom-up decoding process needed for selective listening is based on Field's model (2008:114):

Phoneme level	/hələʊənwelkmtəbi:bi:si:nju:z /
Syllable level	/hə+ləʊ+ən+wel+kmtə+ bi:+ bi:+ si:+ nju:z/
word level	hello + and + welcome + to + BBC + news
Chunk level	[hello] + and + [welcome to BBC news]
Syntax level	interjection + conjunction + interjection + preposition+ abbreviation + noun
Meaning level	a greeting in a polite and friendly way in the beginning of the news report to someone who might be listening to it on BBC channel

Meaning-building when listening also works on two additional bottom-up levels not included above: intonation and sentence stress. The ability to decode intonation and sentence stress helps recognise key words, the speaker's intention and attitude.

The Top-down model emphasizes the use of background knowledge to predict content. It refers to listeners' world knowledge (J.J. Wilson, 2008). Listeners use pre-established patterns of knowledge and discourse structure stored in memory. Terms used in the top-down model include schema, frame, script and scenario.

A schema consists of "an active organization of past experiences," a frame "organizes knowledge about certain properties of objects, events, and action, which typically belong together", a script deals with "event sequences," while a scenario consists of "representations of situations or events from long term memory" (Schank and Abelson, 1977).

Schank and Abelson (1977) use the term "script" to refer to the memory structure and a person's general knowledge of certain situation-action routine (e.g. riding a bus, visiting a doctor, going to a restaurant, asking for directions and so on). When working with my students in Ukraine, after setting the task (before actual listening) I ask them to predict what they will hear. If the topic is unfamiliar it is difficult and they then concentrate more on listening bottom-up.

2.2. Types of listening

According to J.J. Wilson (2008), the types of listening we engage in can be categorized as follows:

Listening for gist	❖ refers to when listeners need to gain a general idea of what is being said (who is speaking to whom; why; how successful they are in their communication)
Listening for specific information	❖ refers to when learners do not need to understand everything but only a specific part (e.g. they listen to a list of delayed flights due to poor weather conditions and their task is to hear news only about one particular flight).
Listening in detail	❖ refers to the type of listening students do when, for instance, they need to find errors or determine differences between two passages. They cannot afford to ignore any information as they do not know what information will help them to fulfil the task.
Inferential listening	❖ refers to the type of listening learners do when they wish to know how the speaker feels (make deductions by going beyond what is actually stated). Inferring is closely linked to schema theory in that it requires a 'model' in our heads of how the situation might unfold.

Michael Rost (2011:183) states that there are 6 types of listening practices and a balanced approach includes all of them.

Listening type	Learning Focus	Activity Focus
Intensive	Phonology, syntax, lexis	Learner pays close attention to what is actually said
Selective	Main idea, pre-set tasks	To extract key information; to construct and utilize it in a meaningful way
Interactive	Attempt to clarify meaning	Interaction with others; discovering information and negotiating solutions
Extensive	Managing large amount of listening input	Listening to longer extracts; performing meaning oriented tasks
Responsive	Response to input	To respond and convey learners' own opinions and ideas
Autonomous	Learner management of progress, navigation of 'help' options	Learners select their own tasks and monitor their own progress