

e-ISSN 3060-5059

DOI: 10.67227



IJTIMOYIY-GUMANITAR SOHADA ILMIY-INNOVATSION TADQIQOTLAR

ILMIY METODIK JURNAL

Scientific and Innovative Research in
Social and Humanitarian Studies

Vol. 3 • Issue 9

2026



Founded in 2024



publishscience.uz



publish_science_journal@mail.ru



PEER REVIEWED • OPEN ACCESS

INGLIZ DISKURSIDA NISBIY ERGASH GAPLAR: BBC NEWS MATERIALLARIDA CHEKLOVCHI VA CHEKLOVCHI BO'LMAGAN NISBIY ERGASH GAPLARNING TAQSIMLANISHI

Odiljonova Umidaxon Oybek qizi

Qo'qon universiteti Andijon filiali.

e-mail: umidakhan9297@gmail.com ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0009-0003-6443-1969>

Annotatsiya.

Ushbu tadqiqot zamonaviy ingliz tilidagi yangiliklar diskursida, xususan, BBC News maqolalarida nisbiy ergash gaplarning qo'llanilishi va taqsimlanishini o'rganadi. Tadqiqot Sport, Business, Innovation, Culture, Arts, Travel va Earth kabi yettita asosiy bo'linga oid 329 ta maqoladan tashkil topgan korpusga asoslanadi. Unda *who*, *which*, *that* hamda nol ko'rsatkichli (*zero relative*) nisbiy ergash gaplarning to'rt turi qo'llanish chastotasi va strukturaviy variativligi jihatidan tahlil qilinadi. Nisbiy ergash gaplar, shuningdek, ularning sintaktik konfiguratsiyalari (SS, SO, OO va OS) asosida o'rganilib, turli jurnalistik bo'limlar kesimida miqdoriy va sifat jihatdan qiyoslanadi. Cheklovchi nisbiy ergash gaplar (RRC) va cheklovchi bo'lmagan nisbiy ergash gaplar (NRRC), shuningdek, ushbu ikki turning qanday strukturaviy modellarda namoyon bo'lishiga alohida e'tibor qaratiladi. Natijalar BBC News diskursida RRC va NRRC birliklari o'ziga xos strukturaviy modellarni namoyon etishini hamda bu holat ularning sintaktik va diskursiv funksiyalaridagi farqlarni aks ettirishini ko'rsatadi.

Kalit so'zlar: nisbiy ergash gaplar, *who*, *which*, *that*, nol ko'rsatkichli nisbiy ergash gap, cheklovchi va cheklovchi bo'lmagan nisbiy ergash gaplar, gap konfiguratsiyasi (SS, SO, OO, OS), BBC News diskursi.

ОТНОСИТЕЛЬНЫЕ ПРИДАТОЧНЫЕ ПРЕДЛОЖЕНИЯ В АНГЛИЙСКОМ ДИСКУРСЕ: РАСПРЕДЕЛЕНИЕ ОГРАНИЧИТЕЛЬНЫХ И НЕОГРАНИЧИТЕЛЬНЫХ ОТНОСИТЕЛЬНЫХ ПРИДАТОЧНЫХ ПРЕДЛОЖЕНИЙ В МАТЕРИАЛАХ BBC NEWS

Одилжонова Умидахон Ойбек кизи

Андижанский филиал Кокандского университета.

Аннотация.

В данном исследовании рассматриваются употребление и распределение относительных придаточных предложений в современном англоязычном новостном дискурсе с особым акцентом на материалы BBC News. Исследование основано на корпусе из 329 статей семи основных разделов: Sport, Business, Innovation, Culture, Arts, Travel и Earth. Анализируются частотность и структурная вариативность четырёх типов относительных придаточных предложений: с *who*, *which*, *that* и с нулевым относительным маркером (*zero relative*). Относительные придаточные предложения также рассматриваются в соответствии с их синтаксическими конфигурациями (SS, SO, OO и OS), что позволяет проводить количественное и качественное сопоставление различных журналистских разделов. Особое внимание уделяется распределению ограничительных относительных придаточных предложений (RRC) и неограничительных относительных придаточных предложений (NRRC), а также структурным моделям, в которых реализуются эти два типа. Результаты показывают, что RRC и NRRC в дискурсе BBC News характеризуются различными структурными моделями, отражающими различия в их синтаксических и дискурсивных функциях.

Ключевые слова: относительные придаточные предложения, *who*, *which*, *that*, нулевой относительный маркер, ограничительные и неограничительные относительные придаточные предложения, конфигурация предложения (SS, SO, OO, OS), дискурс BBC News.

RELATIVE CLAUSES IN ENGLISH DISCOURSE: THE DISTRIBUTION OF RESTRICTIVE AND NON-RESTRICTIVE RELATIVE CLAUSES IN BBC NEWS

Odiljonova Umidaxon Oybek qizi

Andijan Branch of Kokand University.

Abstract.

This study investigates the use and distribution of relative clauses in contemporary English news discourse, with a particular focus on BBC News articles. Drawing on a corpus of 329 articles from seven major sections—Sport, Business, Innovation, Culture, Arts,

Travel, and Earth—the study examines the frequency and structural variation of four types of relative clauses: *who*, *which*, *that*, and zero relatives. The relative clauses are further analyzed according to their syntactic configurations (SS, SO, OO, and OS), enabling both quantitative and qualitative comparisons across different journalistic sections. Particular attention is given to the distribution of restrictive relative clauses (RRCs) and non-restrictive relative clauses (NRRCs), as well as to the structural patterns in which these two types occur. The findings indicate that RRCs and NRRCs exhibit distinct structural patterns in BBC News discourse, reflecting differences in their syntactic and discourse functions.

Keywords: relative clauses, *who*, *which*, *that*, zero relatives, restrictive and non-restrictive relative clauses, sentence configuration (SS, SO, OO, OS), BBC News discourse.

Introduction. Relative clauses constitute an important syntactic and discourse-level resource in contemporary English, particularly in written news discourse, where information is frequently presented in a compact, precise, and highly structured manner. By modifying a noun phrase, relative clauses allow writers to provide additional information, identify or distinguish referents, and establish relationships between different pieces of information within a sentence. Their use therefore contributes not only to syntactic complexity but also to the organization and interpretation of information in discourse.

In English, relative clauses can broadly be classified into restrictive relative clauses (RRCs) and non-restrictive relative clauses (NRRCs). Restrictive relative clauses serve to identify or delimit the reference of the noun phrase they modify, thereby contributing information that is essential to the intended interpretation of the referent. Non-restrictive relative clauses, in contrast, provide additional or supplementary information about an already identifiable referent and are typically separated from the main clause by punctuation, particularly commas in written English. This functional distinction may influence the way information is structured and interpreted in news discourse [1, p. 25].

The present study is particularly concerned with the extent to which the structural characteristics of relative clauses are represented and distributed in BBC News discourse. Since news reporting covers a wide range of topics and communicative contexts, the frequency and structural patterns of relative clauses may vary according to the subject matter of individual news sections. BBC News regularly publishes articles covering diverse topics, including Sport, Business, Innovation, Culture, Arts, Travel, and Earth. These topic-based differences provide an opportunity to examine whether particular types and structures of relative clauses are more frequently associated with specific areas of news reporting.

Within this framework, the study focuses primarily on four forms of relative clauses: *who*, *which*, *that*, and zero relatives. These forms represent important patterns of relative-clause formation in contemporary English and may perform different syntactic and discourse functions depending on their structural environment. By examining their frequency and distribution across different news topics, the study seeks to determine whether the choice of relative-clause type is associated with particular journalistic contexts.

Particular attention is also given to the distribution of restrictive relative clauses (RRCs) and non-restrictive relative clauses (NRRCs). Examining these two categories makes it possible to explore not only how frequently relative clauses occur but also how they contribute to the organization of information. RRCs can help journalists specify and identify the entities being discussed, whereas NRRCs can provide supplementary information without being necessary for identifying the referent. Consequently, the distinction between RRCs and NRRCs may be relevant to the ways in which news writers balance essential information with additional descriptive or explanatory information.

The study further investigates the syntactic configurations of relative clauses, represented as SS, SO, OO, and OS, in order to identify structural patterns across different types of news discourse. This analysis allows the study to move beyond simple frequency counts and examine how relative clauses are structurally organized within sentences. Comparing these configurations across news topics and between RRCs and NRRCs may reveal patterns in the ways journalists construct and present information to their audiences.

The underlying assumption of the study is that the use of relative clauses in news discourse is not exclusively a matter of grammatical choice. Their distribution may also be related to the communicative and pragmatic requirements of particular types of news reporting. Different topics may require different ways of introducing, identifying, describing, or elaborating on participants, events, and entities. In this sense, the structural and functional variation of relative clauses may contribute to the overall organization and comprehensibility of news texts.

Accordingly, this study examines the frequency, structural variation, and discourse distribution of relative clauses in a corpus of 329 BBC News articles representing seven major sections: Sport, Business, Innovation, Culture, Arts, Travel, and Earth. The analysis focuses on the relative markers *who*, *which*, *that*, and zero, their syntactic configurations, and the distribution of RRCs and NRRCs across different news topics. Through this analysis, the study aims to provide a clearer account of how relative clauses function as grammatical and discourse resources in contemporary English news writing and how their structural and pragmatic characteristics vary according to the topic of the news.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The acquisition and processing of relative clauses have been extensively investigated over the past several decades. A substantial body of research has focused on how children comprehend and acquire relative clauses in English, including studies by Cecily Jill Duffield, Jena D. Hwang, and Laura A. Michaelis [1]. This research has contributed

significantly to our understanding of the relationship between the syntactic structure of relative clauses and their processing and acquisition.

English relative clauses can be classified according to two major syntactic dimensions: the syntactic role of the head noun (or antecedent) and the syntactic role of the gap, that is, the position occupied by the relativized element within the relative clause [2, p. 78]. On the basis of these two dimensions, relative clauses are commonly classified into four structural configurations: Subject-Subject (SS), Subject-Object (SO), Object-Subject (OS), and Object-Object (OO) relatives. These configurations describe the grammatical relationship between the antecedent in the main clause and the relativized element within the relative clause.

In an SS (Subject-Subject) relative clause, the head noun functions as the subject of the main clause, while the relativized element functions as the subject of the relative clause. For example, in *The horse that pushed the goat stands on the lion*, the noun *horse* is the subject of the main clause and also corresponds to the subject position within the relative clause. In an SO (Subject-Object) relative clause, the head noun functions as the subject of the main clause, whereas the relativized element functions as the object of the relative clause. This configuration can be illustrated by *The cow that the sheep pushed stands on the kangaroo*, in which *cow* is the subject of the main clause and corresponds to the object position in the relative clause.

In an OS (Object-Subject) relative clause, the head noun functions as the object of the main clause, while the relativized element functions as the subject of the relative clause. For example, in *The cow pushes the kangaroo that jumped over the goat*, *kangaroo* functions as the object of the main clause and as the subject of the relative clause. Finally, in an OO (Object-Object) relative clause, the head noun functions as the object of the main clause, and the relativized element corresponds to the object position within the relative clause. An example is *The kangaroo stands on the pig that the sheep pushed*, where *pig* functions as the object of the main clause and corresponds to the object of the relative clause [4, pp. 116–119].

These four configurations have provided an important framework for investigating the acquisition and processing of relative clauses. They demonstrate that relative clauses involve an interaction between the grammatical role of the antecedent and the grammatical role of the relativized element within the subordinate clause.

Differences among these configurations can influence the processing difficulty and interpretation of relative clauses, particularly in language acquisition [4, p. 55].

However, the relative-clause structures investigated in experimental studies of acquisition do not necessarily correspond to the patterns found in children's spontaneous speech. Research by Diessel [2] and Diessel and Tomasello [3] indicates that children's early relative clauses are frequently associated with a single noun phrase or, more commonly, with an entire clause in spontaneous discourse. This observation suggests that the development and use of relative clauses cannot be understood solely in terms of abstract syntactic configurations. Their distribution is also influenced by discourse context, communicative function, and the way speakers organize information in naturally occurring language.

The distinction among SS, SO, OS, and OO configurations is particularly relevant to the present study because these structural categories provide a systematic framework for analyzing relative clauses in authentic English discourse. While much previous research has concentrated on the acquisition and comprehension of relative clauses, the present study applies these syntactic distinctions to contemporary English news discourse, specifically BBC News [6, p. 78]. By examining the distribution of these configurations together with the relative markers *who*, *which*, *that*, and zero relatives, the study seeks to extend previous syntactic research into a corpus-based analysis of naturally occurring journalistic language. In addition, the study considers the distribution of restrictive and non-restrictive relative clauses, thereby connecting syntactic structure with the discourse functions of relative clauses in news writing.

METHODS

The study employed a corpus-based approach to investigate the use and distribution of relative clauses in BBC News discourse. First, relevant data were collected from a corpus of BBC News articles. The collected relative clauses were then examined from grammatical and structural perspectives and classified according to their syntactic properties. The data were further grouped based on the topic-specific sections of BBC News, including Sport, Business, Innovation, Culture, Arts, Travel, and Earth, in order to identify possible differences in the distribution of relative clauses across news topics. In addition, the relative clauses were analyzed according to their sentence configurations, namely SS, SO, OO, and OS. These configurations were identified and classified systematically to determine the structural patterns in which relative clauses occur. The analysis also considered the distribution of restrictive and non-restrictive relative clauses across the different topic-based sections and syntactic configurations [9, pp. 34–40]. This methodological approach makes it possible to examine both the frequency and structural distribution of relative clauses and to identify patterns of grammatical and discourse variation in BBC News.

RESULTS

Regarding data collection, a total of approximately 329 BBC News articles were examined and analyzed to explore the use of relative clauses—specifically *who*, *which*, *that*, and zero relatives. These articles were selected from various sections of BBC News, including categories such as Travel, Innovation, Business, and others. The selection was purposeful, as such sections help readers grasp the central ideas of the articles clearly, without confusion or misinterpretation. In total, seven main sections of BBC News, along with their subcategories, were included in the analysis.

Table 1. Frequency of Relative Clauses in BBC News

Type	Who	%	Which	%	That	%	Zero	%
SS	1024	96.1%	439	72.8%	400	54.1%	6	9.7%
SO	34	3.2%	141	23.4%	266	36.0%	36	58.1%
OO	3	0.3%	21	3.5%	57	7.7%	16	25.8%
OS	5	0%	2	0.3%	16	2.2%	4	6.4%

This table shows that frequency of relative clauses in sentence – initial positions according to sentence configuration including SS, SO, OO, OS types. This occurrence shows that the highest frequency of the usage in SS type based on who relative clause. Because usually in discourse in sentence –initial position demonstrates the dominance of the SS in the usage of relative clause who. As according to its way of conveying message or news to the audience, usually news subtopics are introduced according to some special event or some special person, therefore, who is a dominant.

Table 2. Frequency of relative clauses based on sub-topics of BBC News

Types of news	Who	Which	That	Zero relative
Sport	43	27	18	16
Business	46	37	64	16
Innovation	306	167	159	21
Culture	323	126	158	26
Arts	129	90	83	130
Travel	183	114	219	60
Earth	31	42	61	9
Total	1061	603	762	278

In this given table illustrates that the frequency of relative clauses based on the sub-topics of BBC news. We can distinguish that which relative clause is a dominant and which one is not. This can give a semantic meaning to the different topic of BBC news.

The Frequency of Restrictive and Non-restrictive Relative Clauses.

Table 11. Frequency of Relative clauses in Restrictiveness and Non-restrictiveness

TYPE	RRC	%	NRRC	%
WHO	371	41.98%	113	62.09%
WHICH	228	25.79%	69	37.91%
THAT	206	23.31%	-	0%
ZERO	79	8.93%		0%
TOTAL	884		182	

According to the given table, the most frequently used relative pronoun is *who*, as it shows dominance in both types of relative clauses, accounting for 41.98% of RRCs and 62.09% of NRRCs. In second place is *which*, which shows the second-highest frequency among these findings, accounting for 25.79% of RRCs and 37.91% of NRRCs. The lowest frequency is observed in the use of zero relative clauses, which account for only 8.93% of RRCs, while they do not occur in NRRCs, corresponding to 0%. In order to explore the cognitive effects of relative clauses in discourse, we identified the frequency of each relative clause according to the grammatical role of the head noun (i.e., antecedent) and the relative pronoun: subject-subject (SS), subject-object (SO), object-object (OO), and object-subject (OS) roles.

DISCUSSION

The findings of this study provide evidence that relative clauses constitute an important grammatical resource in BBC News discourse and that their distribution varies according to both syntactic configuration and news topic. The analysis of 329 BBC News articles demonstrates that the four relative-clause forms examined in the study—*who*, *which*, *that*, and zero relatives—do not occur with equal frequency. Their distribution is associated with the syntactic role of the relativized element as well as with the communicative characteristics of different news sections.

Distribution according to syntactic configuration

The results presented in Table 1 indicate substantial differences among SS, SO, OO, and OS configurations. The most striking pattern is the very high frequency of the SS configuration with *who*, which accounts for 1,024 occurrences (96.1% of the *who* cases reported in the table). This strong predominance suggests that *who* is particularly frequent when the relativized human referent functions as the subject of the relative clause. Such a pattern is compatible with the informational demands of news writing, in which people frequently constitute central participants in reported events, particularly in articles concerning public figures, sports, cultural events, and other human-centered topics.

The SO configuration is considerably more frequent with *which* and *that* than with *who*. In the data, *which* occurs 141 times (23.4%) in the SO configuration, while *that* occurs 266 times (36.0%). This distribution suggests that object functions within relative clauses represent an important structural pattern in news discourse, particularly for *which* and

that. In these constructions, the relative marker refers to the object of the relative clause, while another noun phrase functions as its subject. Such structures enable journalists to incorporate additional information about an entity while maintaining a relatively compact sentence structure [7, p. 20].

The OO and OS configurations occur substantially less frequently overall. Nevertheless, their distribution is informative because it demonstrates that relative clauses in BBC News are not restricted to a single syntactic pattern. The presence of these less frequent configurations indicates that journalists employ relative clauses in a range of grammatical environments depending on the relationship between the antecedent and the grammatical functions represented within the relative clause [9, p. 99].

It is important to clarify that SS, SO, OO, and OS should be interpreted as syntactic configurations rather than sentence-initial or sentence-final positions. The labels describe the grammatical relationship between the antecedent/head noun and the relative element within the relevant clause. Therefore, the low frequency of OS, for example, should not automatically be interpreted as evidence that such clauses occur in sentence-initial position less frequently. Rather, it indicates that this particular combination of grammatical functions is less common in the corpus [10, p. 78].

Distribution across BBC News topics

The topic-based analysis presented in Table 2 reveals considerable variation in the use of relative-clause forms across the seven BBC News sections. The distribution of *who*, *which*, *that*, and zero relatives differs substantially among Sport, Business, Innovation, Culture, Arts, Travel, and Earth.

The highest overall frequency of *who* is found in the Culture section (323 occurrences), followed closely by Innovation (306) and Travel (183). This distribution may reflect the frequent discussion of people, professionals, creators, researchers, and other human participants in these types of news reports. However, the observed frequencies should be interpreted primarily as corpus distributions rather than as evidence that a particular topic inherently requires a particular relative-clause form.

The distribution of *which* is also uneven across the news sections. Its highest frequency occurs in Innovation (167), followed by Culture (126), Travel (114), and Arts (90). This pattern may be associated with the frequent description of objects, developments, places, events, and other non-human entities in these sections. The relative pronoun *which* is commonly used with non-human antecedents and can introduce both restrictive and non-restrictive relative clauses in English.

The form *that* displays a different distribution. It is particularly frequent in Travel (219), followed by Innovation (159), Culture (158), Business (64), and Earth (61). Unlike *who* and *which*, *that* in the present analysis occurs only in restrictive relative clauses. This is consistent with standard descriptions of English relative clauses, which distinguish *that* from *who* and *which* in non-restrictive constructions.

The zero relative is considerably less frequent than the three overt relative markers. Its highest frequency is found in Arts (130), followed by Travel (60). The comparatively restricted distribution of zero relatives is structurally expected because a zero relative is possible when the relativized element functions as an object, but not when it functions as the subject of the relative clause. Zero relatives are also restricted to restrictive environments [4, p. 77].

Taken together, these results indicate that the topic of a news article is associated with differences in the distribution of relative-clause forms. Nevertheless, topic should not be regarded as the sole determining factor. The choice among *who*, *which*, *that*, and zero relatives is also constrained by grammatical function, the nature of the antecedent, and the restrictive or non-restrictive status of the clause.

Restrictive and non-restrictive relative clauses

The distinction between restrictive relative clauses (RRCs) and non-restrictive relative clauses (NRRCs) provides an additional dimension for interpreting the findings. Restrictive relative clauses contribute information that identifies or limits the reference of the antecedent, whereas non-restrictive relative clauses provide supplementary information about an already identifiable referent. In written English, NRRCs are normally separated from the surrounding clause by commas, whereas RRCs are not [9, pp. 78–90].

As shown in Table 11, the corpus contains 884 RRCs and 182 NRRCs according to the reported totals. Among the RRCs, *who* is the most frequent form, with 371 occurrences (41.98%), followed by *which* with 228 occurrences (25.79%), *that* with 206 occurrences (23.31%), and zero relatives with 79 occurrences (8.93%). This distribution demonstrates the substantial role of *who* in restrictive relative clauses in the BBC News corpus.

The distribution of NRRCs is more restricted. *Who* accounts for 113 cases (62.09%), while *which* accounts for 69 (37.91%). No instances of *that* or zero relatives are reported among the NRRCs. This pattern is grammatically significant rather than accidental. Standard descriptions of English grammar indicate that *that* cannot introduce a non-restrictive relative clause, while zero relatives are likewise unavailable in non-restrictive constructions.

The dominance of *who* among NRRCs is also consistent with the frequent use of non-restrictive relative clauses to provide supplementary information about people. In news discourse, a journalist may first identify a person as an established participant or referent and then use a non-restrictive clause to add biographical, professional, descriptive, or contextual information. In this respect, NRRCs can function as a means of integrating additional information without making that information essential to the identification of the referent [5, p. 44].

The results for RRCs show a broader grammatical distribution because RRCs permit *who*, *which*, *that*, and zero relatives, subject to their syntactic and semantic constraints. RRCs therefore provide journalists with a flexible mechanism for specifying participants and entities and for distinguishing a particular referent from other possible referents. This function is particularly relevant to news discourse, where precise identification of people, places,

organizations, objects, and events is essential to the presentation of information.

Syntactic and discourse functions

The combined findings suggest that the distribution of relative clauses in BBC News cannot be explained solely in terms of grammatical frequency. Relative clauses also contribute to the organization of information within news texts. RRCs primarily assist in identifying or specifying the referent, whereas NRRCs allow writers to add supplementary information to an already identifiable referent. This distinction is particularly relevant to journalistic writing because news reports must frequently combine concise presentation with sufficient contextualization [6, p. 78].

The high frequency of *who* in the corpus is particularly noteworthy. Its prominence may be related to the human-centered nature of many news reports, where people constitute important participants in reported events. However, this interpretation should be treated as a corpus-based observation rather than a universal characteristic of news writing. The frequency of *who* varies across the BBC sections, demonstrating that the topic and content of individual articles also influence the distribution of relative clauses.

Similarly, the relatively high frequency of *that* in restrictive constructions demonstrates its importance as a device for integrating identifying information into noun phrases. Since *that* is restricted to restrictive environments, its occurrence in the corpus is closely connected with the need to specify or delimit the reference of the antecedent. By contrast, the zero relative represents a more structurally restricted option and therefore occurs less frequently overall.

Overall, the findings demonstrate that relative clauses in BBC News perform both syntactic and discourse-organizational functions. Their distribution is shaped by the grammatical role of the relativized element, the type of relative clause, the nature of the antecedent, and the topic of the news article. The interaction of these factors demonstrates that relative-clause usage in news discourse is structurally patterned rather than randomly distributed [3, pp. 102–105].

CONCLUSION

This study has examined the use, distribution, and structural variation of relative clauses in contemporary English news discourse, with particular attention to BBC News articles. Drawing on a corpus of 329 articles from seven major news sections—Sport, Business, Innovation, Culture, Arts, Travel, and Earth—the study investigated four major forms of relative clauses: *who*, *which*, *that*, and zero relatives. The analysis considered their frequency, syntactic configurations, topic-based distribution, and occurrence in restrictive relative clauses (RRCs) and non-restrictive relative clauses (NRRCs).

The findings demonstrate that relative clauses are an important grammatical and discourse resource in BBC News writing. Their distribution is not uniform across the corpus but varies according to the relative-clause form, syntactic configuration, news topic, and restrictive status of the clause. The analysis of the SS, SO, OO, and OS configurations indicates that relative clauses occur in a range of syntactic environments, although some configurations are considerably more frequent than others. In particular, the strong representation of the SS configuration with *who* demonstrates the prominent role of human referents and subject-oriented relative clauses in the corpus.

The topic-based analysis further demonstrates that the distribution of relative-clause forms varies across different BBC News sections. The frequencies of *who*, *which*, *that*, and zero relatives differ across Sport, Business, Innovation, Culture, Arts, Travel, and Earth. These differences suggest that relative-clause usage is associated with the informational and topical characteristics of individual news sections. However, the findings should not be interpreted as indicating that topic alone determines the choice of a relative-clause form. Rather, topical variation interacts with grammatical factors such as the nature of the antecedent and its syntactic role within the relative clause.

The distinction between RRCs and NRRCs provides an additional perspective on the grammatical organization of BBC News discourse. The findings show that RRCs substantially outnumber NRRCs in the analyzed data. Among the RRCs, *who* is the most frequent form, followed by *which*, *that*, and zero relatives. In contrast, the NRRCs in the corpus are represented by *who* and *which*, while *that* and zero relatives are absent. This distribution corresponds to important grammatical constraints in English, since *that* cannot normally introduce a non-restrictive relative clause and zero relatives are likewise restricted from functioning as non-restrictive relative clauses.

The predominance of *who* in both restrictive and non-restrictive contexts is particularly noteworthy. This pattern may be related to the frequent representation of human participants in news discourse. In RRCs, *who* can contribute to the identification or specification of a person, whereas in NRRCs it can provide additional information about an already identifiable person. Thus, the same relative marker can participate in different discourse functions depending on the restrictive status of the clause.

Overall, the findings indicate that relative clauses in BBC News serve not only as syntactic mechanisms for combining clauses but also as important resources for organizing, specifying, and supplementing information. Restrictive relative clauses help journalists identify and delimit referents, while non-restrictive relative clauses allow additional information to be incorporated into the text without being essential to the identification of the referent. Through these functions, relative clauses contribute to the compact and information-rich style characteristic of news discourse.

The study therefore demonstrates an interaction between grammar, syntax, topic, and discourse function in the use of relative clauses. The choice of *who*, *which*, *that*, or zero relative is constrained by grammatical structure while also reflecting the communicative requirements of particular news contexts. Similarly, the distinction between RRCs and NRRCs illustrates how grammatical structure can contribute to the organization of information for readers.

In conclusion, the analysis of BBC News provides evidence that relative clauses constitute a systematic and multifunctional component of contemporary English news discourse.

Their frequency and distribution are shaped by syntactic configuration, antecedent type, restrictive status, and news topic. By combining quantitative frequency analysis with grammatical and structural classification, this study contributes to a more detailed understanding of how relative clauses function in authentic English journalistic discourse. The findings may also provide a basis for further corpus-based research comparing relative-clause usage across different news organizations, genres, varieties of English, and forms of digital media.

REFERENCES

1. Duffield C. J., Hwang J. D., Michaelis L. A. Identifying Assertions in Text and Discourse: The Presentational Relative Clause Construction // *Proceedings of the NAACL HLT Workshop on Extracting and Using Constructions in Computational Linguistics*. – Los Angeles, CA: Association for Computational Linguistics, 2010. – P. 17–24. – URL: <https://aclanthology.org/W10-0803/> [ACL Anthology](#)
2. Diessel H. *The Acquisition of Complex Sentences*. – Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004. – 244 p. – DOI: 10.1017/CBO9780511486531. – URL: <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511486531> [Cambridge](#)
3. Diessel H., Tomasello M. The Development of Relative Clauses in Spontaneous Child Speech // *Cognitive Linguistics*. – 2001. – Vol. 11, No. 1–2. – P. 131–151. – DOI: 10.1515/cogl.2001.006. – URL: <https://doi.org/10.1515/cogl.2001.006> [Scholars@Duke](#)
4. Nguyen Thi Xuan Phuong. Semantic Characteristics of Relative Clauses in English // *Asian Journal of Social Sciences, Arts and Humanities*. – 2023. – Vol. 11, No. 1. – URL: <https://multidisciplinaryjournals.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/Full-Paper-Semantic-characteristics-of-relative-clauses-in-English.pdf> [Многоотраслевые Журналы](#)
5. Abubakari H. The Syntax and Semantics of Relative Clauses in Kusaal // *Ghana Journal of Linguistics*. – 2019. – Vol. 8, No. 2. – P. 27–62. – DOI: 10.4314/gjl.v8i2.2. – URL: <https://doi.org/10.4314/gjl.v8i2.2> [ResearchGate](#)
6. Cornish F. Revisiting the System of English Relative Clauses: Structure, Semantics, Discourse Functionality // *English Language & Linguistics*. – 2018. – Vol. 22, No. 3. – P. 431–456. – DOI: 10.1017/S136067431700003X. – URL: <https://doi.org/10.1017/S136067431700003X> [Cambridge](#)
7. Lambrecht K. *Information Structure and Sentence Form: Topic, Focus, and the Mental Representations of Discourse Referents*. – Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994. – 408 p. – DOI: 10.1017/CBO9780511620607. – URL: <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511620607> [Cambridge](#)
8. Celce-Murcia M., Larsen-Freeman D. *The Grammar Book: An ESL/EFL Teacher's Course*. – Boston: Heinle & Heinle, 1983. – 655 p. – ISBN 0-8384-2850-9. – URL: <https://books.google.com/books?id=5Tg6PQAACAAJ> [Google Книги](#)
9. Comrie B. *Language Universals and Linguistic Typology: Syntax and Morphology*. – Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1983. – XI, 252 p. – ISBN 0-631-12618-X. – URL: <https://ci.nii.ac.jp/ncid/BD13575736> [CiNii Research](#)
10. Bunton D. *Common English Errors in Hong Kong*. – Hong Kong: Longman, 1989. – URL: <https://davidbunton.com/c/books> [David Bunton](#)
11. Brown G., Yule G. *Discourse Analysis*. – Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983. – 288 p. – ISBN 0-521-28475-9. – URL: <https://books.google.com/books?id=9gUrbzov9x0C> [Google Книги](#)
12. Chafe W. L. Language and Consciousness // *Language*. – 1974. – Vol. 50, No. 1. – P. 111–133. – DOI: 10.2307/412014. – URL: <https://doi.org/10.2307/412014> [Cambridge](#)