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## *List of Abbreviations*

*AH*          *Accessibility Hierarchy*

*DO*          *Direct Object*

*EEBO*       *Early English Books Online*

*EModE*     *Early Modern English*

*LME*        *Late Middle English*

*ME*          *Middle English*

*NP*          *Noun Phrase*

*OE*          *Old English*

*PDE*        *Present-Day English*

*PC*          *Prepositional Complement*

*PP*          *Prepositional Phrase*

*RC*          *Relative Clause*

*SU*          *Subject*

# 1. Introduction

This thesis is a corpus-based study of Middle English and Early Modern English relativization strategies and the development of the pronominal relative paradigm introduced by *wh*-words. This research aims to explain when and how such English relativizers as *who, whom,* and *which* advanced, in which positions they replaced the universal ME relativizer *that,* and how the pronominal and invariable relativization strategies competed during the analysed period. How the morphosyntactic properties and syntactic roles of the pronominal relativizers influenced the development of the English relative clause will be discussed. The primary subject of the current work is the behaviour of different relativizing *wh*-pronouns in the same constructions within relative clauses in the period between the 1470s and 1690s. The rising frequency of relative pronouns derived from interrogative ones is viewed in relation to the accessibility of their syntactic roles in relative clauses. The syntactic roles of the pronominal and invariable relativizers will be analysed to explain the process of the introduction of the *wh*-relatives into the Late Middle English and Early Modern English relative clause. Possible reasons and conditions for the strengthening of the pronominal relativization strategy are suggested, and the approximate order of the introduction of the pronominal relative markers should be interpreted within the perspective of the Accessibility Hierarchy (henceforth: AH), quantitative and qualitative analysis of the textual evidence. It is assumed in the current paper that different relativization strategies co-existed and competed at the same time. One can also hypothesize that there is a direct interrelation between the rise of the pronominal relativization paradigm and the decline of the invariable one. The textual evidence should demonstrate whether the introduction of the relative pronouns was a stimulus or cause of change. The level of integration of *who, whom* and *which* into the overall grammatical structure of the English sentence will be measured through the quantitative analysis of the obtained occurrences. The syntactic behaviour of the relativizing units will be determined through analysis of their syntactic roles, co-reference with the relativized antecedents and the comparative analysis of frequency of the relative markers with the total number of occurrences. According to Fischer (1992), two parameters were at work as far as the types of relative clauses are concerned. The first parameter, which is termed "an animacy parameter," decided between *who* and *whom* on the one hand and *that* and *which* on the other. They followed animate and inanimate antecedents in main clauses respectively. Distinction between the so-called restrictive and non-restrictive clauses is based on the second factor, which is termed "an information parameter." The current research considers these parameters as additional aspects during the inference of conclusions regarding causes and consequences related to the transformations in the LME and EModE

periods. As mentioned above, the introduction and development of the pronominal relativizing paradigm are viewed from the perspective of the Accessibility Hierarchy. Edward Keenan and Bernard Comrie (1977) discovered the existence of strong tendencies, as far as the ordering of the syntactic roles of the relativized noun phrases or relativizers is concerned. The current research focuses on the syntactic roles of the relative markers and assumes that the less accessible positions were taken by the pronouns first. According to the AH theory, the syntactic function of the relative marker is the most relevant variable to analyse the development of the *wh*-relativizers, because it is possible to state that there are more and less accessible syntactic roles. Subject positions can be accessed and processed more easily than those of a direct object or preposition complement within the prepositional phrase. The accessibility is interpreted from the cognitive perspective, and it is assumed that the grammatical variation is correlated with the efficiency and processing ease. According to Hawkins (2004), pronominal relativizers are more explicit, and their use makes the processing easier. Therefore, the *wh*-relatives are used in the harder-to-relativize roles (Hawkins 2004: 183). It is assumed that the less accessible positions require more explicit relativizers, and this might explain why the *wh*-relativizers entered the English relativization system from the least accessible positions and the invariable relative marker *that* was more resistant to substitution in the more easily accessible positions. The current work contributes to the development of the AH theory. Its primary goal is to examine how different means of relativization and linkage co-existed, and at what particular point in time the interrogative pronouns began to function as relative markers. It traces the development of the *wh*-relativizers diachronically, discusses the status of the forms and, finally, suggests how the category of pronominal relative markers influenced the development of the relative clause. Whereas the AH theory views the establishment of additional meaning and connection from the cognitive perspective, another argument of this research is based on the assumption that the grammatical polysemy of the invariable *that* on the one hand and the flexibility of the *wh*-pronouns on the other, contributed to the successful integration of these pronominal linguistic units into the LME and the EModE relative clauses. One can assume that the presence of the invariable, pronominal and zero relativization strategies during the analysed period reflected the respective Old English (OE) paradigm. According to Suarez-Gomez (2008), the recession and disappearance of the OE *se/seþe* relative pronouns triggered the introduction of the *wh*-relativizers in Late Middle English (Suarez-Gomez 2008: 349). The current paper supports the idea that the introduction of the pronominal relativizing units did not represent an absolute innovation, but should be viewed as an evolutionary stage of the grammatical tradition established during the OE period when such pronouns as *se, seo,* and *þæt*

("that"), frequently combined with the invariant *þe,* were used. Suarez-Gomez (2008) states that the *wh*-elements were introduced into the LME relative clause when the OE demonstrative pronouns *se* and *sepe* significantly decreased in their frequency (Suarez-Gomez 2008: 345). The results of this empirical observation sound quite plausible and logical, because the pronominal relativization strategy was realized by different grammatical units in different periods of the development of the English language. It should be emphasized that the pronominal relativization paradigm in Old English was presented by the demonstrative pronominal system (*se[þe]/seo[þe]/þæt[þe]*) (Suarez-Gomez 2008: 342) and therefore, the *wh*-relative markers in Late Middle English cannot be viewed as absolute descendants of the OE pronominal relative markers. Moreover, these relativizers completely died out with time (Emonds & Havranova 2014: 151).

There are also comparative studies which suggest that close language contact resulted in the mutual influence and borrowing of grammatical patterns from one language to another. The fact that Middle English was influenced by other languages cannot be denied, and there was a strong foreign impact especially in the ME translations. The influence of Latin and French was rather significant, and therefore, this paper takes into account possible effects of the language contact. This thesis supports the idea that the pronominal relativization strategy emerged in the earlier periods and advanced during the ME period until the grammatical status of the *wh*-pronouns was fully maintained. There were different linguistic units in Old English and Middle English which can be referred to as representative of the pronominal relative paradigm. Also, the fact that the invariable *that* was used as a universal relativizer at the certain period requires further investigation, and one can hypothesize that there was no direct linkage or relation between the OE demonstratives and ME interrogatives. One assumes that the *wh*-pronouns entered the relative clause to express additional meanings and specify the relation established between the relative clause and the relativized noun phrase in the principal one. They marked further categories, such as animateness and non-restriction in the above-mentioned subordinate relative structures. Parallel constructions and similarities in other languages can be viewed as realization of universal grammatical phenomena. Indeed, the same tendencies in the development and transformation of the relative clause can be examined in many other languages, and the approaches represented in the current paper demonstrate how certain universals can be applied to the English language. Conclusions must be based on the outcomes of the textual evidence analysis and further supported by the above-mentioned theory and hypotheses.

It has been researched how and when the pronominal relativizers entered the LME syntactic system. Various ideas regarding the reasons for such a historical change have been suggested in previous studies regarding the use of pronouns as relative markers. However, it is still not clear in which order the modern relative *who, whom,* and *which* appeared and why they could replace each other in certain syntactic positions. Fischer (1992), Risannen (2000), and Suarez (2012) provide approximate dates of the first instances of *who* during the ME period, and this research views the variants in Late Middle English and Early Modern English, and analyses the context in which these new relativizers were used. It is expected that the parallel use of the invariable *that* and *wh*-words will be found in the target texts, and the primary goal of the research is to compare and analyse at what point in time the pronominal paradigm started to be used rather frequently and fully embedded into the grammatical structure of the LME sentence. Of course, the introduction of the pronominal relativization paradigm into the structure of Late Middle English was a gradual and sequential process, and it is important to take all influential extra-linguistic factors into account. This investigation pays attention to the irregular and rather sporadic distribution of the relative markers too. This paper provides an analysis of the representative texts with a certain frequency of the *wh*-relatives, explains why deviations were possible, and discusses manner and time of the introduction of the relative marker.

The relative clause as a specific type of subordinate one within a complex sentence will be defined and its basic features must be presented to provide a concise and clear description of the phenomenon of relativization. The concept of the noun phrase will be one of the basic tools to explain how different grammatical members are involved in this type of syntactic relation and dependence. The description of the logic in the agreement between the relative markers and antecedents positioned in the main clause will explain why Late Middle English required additional resources to express further meanings and relations. This study is an attempt to present a generalized picture of the process of how the LME relativizers were introduced, developed, and eventually excluded, or conversely, granted leading positions in the structure of the English sentence. Knowledge about the OE and PDE relativization patterns will assist one in this analysis and a clear picture of movement of the *wh*-pronouns will present a final product of the current discussion.

It is assumed that the frequency of the relative pronouns increased from the 1470s to the 1690s and that this rising frequency of the *wh*-relatives is related to the accessibility of their syntactic roles in the relative clause. One aim of the current research is to find the empirical

evidence for these assumptions, and using the comparative analysis I will attempt to provide answers to the following research questions:

1. When were the relative pronouns deriving from the interrogative ones introduced in the English language, and how did they spread across the Accessibility Hierarchy once they began to be used as relative markers?

2. Which syntactic roles in the relatives clauses were taken by the pronominal relativizers first, and what were the consequences of their introduction for the invariable relative marker *that*?

3. What role did the animacy parameter play in the introduction of the *wh*-relativizers, and which of them were used with animate or inanimate relativized antecedents?

4. Is it possible to find evidence that the information parameter and distinction between restrictive and non-restrictive clauses were activated in the observed period? Does the textual evidence demonstrate the use of the pronominal relativizers in non-restrictive relative clauses?

5. How did the morphosyntactic properties of the *wh*-pronouns influence their introduction and development into the relativizers? Was the nominative relative form *who* less frequently used in the roles of the direct object and prepositional complement within the prepositional phrase?

6. Did the pronominal relativizers enter the relative clause from the more or less accessible syntactic positions? Did the invariable relative marker *that* decrease in its use, and in which positions was it more resistant to substitution?

It is quite a difficult task to select the most appropriate research data on the selected topic, but an overview of the existing theories and detailed analysis of the textual evidence will allow the production of plausible conclusions and answers to the above-given research questions. This thesis will use the experience from previous studies and contribute to the theory of Accessibility Hierarchy. The following sections will provide a more detailed description of the target phenomenon, present the approaches selected for this investigation, describe the primary objectives, define possible limitations, and finally, sketch a step-by-step plan for achievement of the set goals.

## 1.1 The phenomenon

The current research concentrates on the relativization strategies in the LME and EModE syntax in a wide context and the focus is narrowed down to the use of *that, who, whom,* and *which* in the roles of relative markers. The scope of this research is defined by the texts of the corpus *Early English Books Online.* Development of the pronominal relativization strategy in Late Middle English and Early Modern English is analysed through the quantitative, qualitative, and comparative analyses of the textual evidence. When one talks about the phenomenon of

relativization, a certain type of clause linkage is meant. The relative clause is defined as "a subordinate clause that modifies an antecedent with which a relative marker in the relative clause is co-referential" (Herrmann 2008: 21). Diessel (2009) provides a similar definition of this phenomenon using different terms, and states that the relative clause modifies a referential expression in the matrix clause. The modified antecedent is also termed the head of the relative clause (Diessel 2009: 127). It is important to emphasize that one should differentiate between the syntactic function of the antecedent on the one hand and the syntactic function of the relative marker on the other. This paper focuses on the syntactic roles of the relativizers in the relative clauses. It is hypothesized that the *wh*-forms were first introduced in the less accessible functions within the relative clause, and thus, they first took the roles of prepositional complements within the prepositional phrases and direct objects rather than those of the subject. This hypothesis is plausible because the less accessible positions in the relative clause required more explicit means of relativization, and this function could be taken by the *wh*-relatives. Relative clauses with the more explicit relativizers such as *who, whom,* and *which* are easier to process, their ability to act as a complement to a preposition and their case-coding properties allow them to be rather flexible.

It has been already mentioned that the Accessibility Hierarchy (AH) by Comrie and Keenan (1977) can be explained from the cognitive perspective, and whereas the subject role, which is on the highest position of the AH axis, can be more easily relativized, the lower positions of the direct object and prepositional complement are harder to relativize (Comrie and Keenan 1977: 68). Concerning the accessibility of the syntactic roles in the relative clauses, one should mention the filler-gap hypothesis by Diessel (2009). The research on the acquisition of complex sentences by adults and children suggests that the processing load of relative clauses depends on the distance between the head of the relative clause, also termed the gap, and the element that is relativized inside the relative clause, also termed the filler (Diessel 2009: 119). The latter can be presented by a gap, invariable, or pronominal relative marker. Examples 1, 2, and 3 from the EEBO corpus demonstrate that the relative clauses including a DO or PC relativizer are more difficult to process than those with a SU relative marker, and this can be explained by the fact that the longer distance between the gap and the filler requires a speaker to keep the filler in working memory longer, until the moment when it encounters the filler (Diessel 2009: 120).

(1) i mean the man$_g$ [$_{RC}$ **who** —$_f$ is king]. (EEBO, Samuel Rutherford, 1644).
(2) you may perceiue it is but an artificiall christ made by man$_g$ [$_{RC}$ **whom** they worshippe —$_f$].

(EEBO, William Cowper, 1613).

(3) they proceeded farther, and went to steny, a town of safety, which the prince<sub>g</sub>, [<sub>RC</sub> **whom** it belonged to ___ <sub>f</sub>], had given them, for their abode. (EBBO, Roger de Rabutin, 1682).

Cognitive perspective and the hypothesis by Diessel (2009) allow an explanation of why the bottom positions of the AH axis are more difficult to access and why the less explicit invariable *that* remained rather strong in the subject role. From the above-presented examples, one can state that once a relative marker acts as a subject, the distance between the gap and the filler is short, and therefore, the relativization in such constructions requires less capacity of the human brain and can be set rather quickly. This principle refers directly to the process of acquisition of the relative clause, but can also contribute to the current analysis.

The above-mentioned theory of the Accessibility Hierarchy refers to the syntactic roles of the relativized NPs, but this perspective can be also applied to the syntactic roles of the relativizers. The current paper contributes to the study of relativization in English, because it focuses on the development of relativizers in relation to the accessibility of their syntactic roles utilizing the AH theory and analyses how the relative pronouns deriving from interrogatives entered the LME relative clause. According to the initial assumption of the AH theory, the syntactic function of a noun phrase in the main clause defines the manner of the appearance and gradual development of the *wh*-forms as relative markers. The main idea of the AH theory can also be useful for the current research, so its basic principles are discussed. The current paper analyses the introduction of the pronominal relativizers from a different perspective, and it is assumed that the syntactic role of the relative marker played a crucial role in the selection of the suitable relativizing unit. The central object of the current paper is the above-mentioned relative marker expressed by such *wh*-pronouns as *who, whom,* and *which.* These linguistic units are also termed the pronominal relativizers, the *wh*-words, the interrogative relative markers, the *wh*-pronouns, and others. Of course, the use of the invariable *that* will be also observed to produce some plausible conclusions about how the pronominal paradigm was developing and interacting with other means of relativization in Late Middle English and Early Modern English. According to the AH theory, the relative markers which stem from the interrogative pronouns entered the relative clause through the so-called "low end" of the AH. This means that at first, the *wh*-relatives started to relativize the NPs in less accessible positions such as oblique, genitive, indirect object, and others (Suarez-Gomez 2008: 345). Suarez-Gomez (2008) reviews all the existing strategies for relativization in Old English and Middle English, applying the Accessibility Hierarchy. The author explicitly states that the *wh*-relatives entered

Late Middle English from the positions of prepositional complement and direct object because the so-called deictic relativizers in Old English and the invariable one in Middle English were abandoning these positions first (Suarez-Gomez 2008: 345). To add more precision to these statements, Hendery (2012) presents the idea that the relative *who* appeared in sentences for the first time only in the 15th century. According to the research, this particular *wh*-relativizer was rather infrequent, whereas its counterpart *which* had been used since the 12th century (Hendery 2012: 49). The empirical evidence analysed in the current paper allows a comparison of the frequency of *who* and *which* in between the 15th and 17th centuries and it will be clear whether the nominative relative form *who* indeed lagged in the development into the relative marker when compared with other *wh*-relatives.

Although the phenomenon of relativization was not new to the syntactic system of the LME language, one should note that the introduction of new relative markers was also caused by the transformation of the RC nature. The syntactic environment in this particular construction was simpler in preceding stages of language development, and the context became more complex through the introduction of further important distinctions, namely, those between animate and inanimate antecedents, restrictiveness and non-restrictiveness of the relative clause, and other aspects such as necessity to function as complement of a preposition. The case inflection became another advantage of the *wh*-relatives in comparison to the invariable *that* of the demonstrative nature. Such tendencies are rather universal, because, in many languages, the relative markers of demonstrative nature (like *that* in English) represent a restrictive type of the relative clause, whereas those of the interrogative base usually express a non-restrictive relation to the main clause. Grammatical polysemy of *that* in Middle English resulted in the necessity to introduce new markers for relativization and the *wh*-pronouns were quickly embedded into the structure of the relative clause.

The PDE relative markers *that, who, whom,* and *which* are interchangeably used in various contexts depending on the grammatical structure of the sentence, the nature of the relativized antecedent, the information provided by the relative clause, the syntactic role of the relativizer in the relative clause, and the syntactic function of the noun phrase in the principal clause. As far as the information parameter is concerned, one distinguishes between restrictive and non-restrictive clauses. Whereas the restrictive clause particularises the antecedent, the non-restrictive clause provides additional information. The restrictive clause delimits the potential referents of the antecedent, and the non-restrictive clause does not serve such a function (Fischer 2000: 295-296). In Present-Day English, the rules for the use of relative markers represent the result of the long-lasting historical selection and the evidence of the

complex transformative processes which can be found in the LME and EModE texts. The introduction of printing allowed people to codify the use of language and systemize specific standards for spelling, grammar, and syntax. The modern use of the relativizers can be explained by the logical rules and specific conditions which require a speaker to opt for one particular relative unit. Bayley and Guy (1995) studied this phenomenon from the synchronic perspective and concluded that factors such as the antecedent, the syntactic position of the relativized unit in the embedded clause, the adjacency of the antecedent, and the channel of communication affect the choice of a particular relativizer to a great extent (Bayley & Guy 1995: 148). The core principle stated in this assumption has always applied to all periods of English language development. Scholars mention that both intra- and extra-linguistic factors influence the selection of necessary relativizers, and they often pay attention to factors such as the channel of communication, genre, author of the specific text, its dialect, and the time of production. This is not the main focus of the current research, but certain phenomena are explained in the context of their actual use and possible effect on various factors. It is also important to mention that there has been a sociological approach designed to explain why representatives of certain social classes have opted for a zero or invariant relativization strategy, while others have preferred pronominal markers in their speech. Adamson (1992) developed the so-called Grammatical Ideology Hypothesis, according to which those constructions expressed by the means of a more logical form are more prestigious among speakers than those which represent instances of deviations and irregularity. When studying the use of relativizers in everyday speech, the author accounts for previously conducted experiments and assumes that the prestige varieties are likely to contain fewer zero relatives when compared to those used in non-prestigious ones (Adamson 1992: 126). This research will not observe whether there is any correlation between the social status and the use of either invariant or pronominal structures. The analysis of the textual evidence from the EEBO corpus allows a conclusion to be formed about whether the rise of the gap relativization strategy influenced the frequencies of the relative *that, who, whom,* and *which.*

Although *that* and the *wh*-words have been used simultaneously and still function as correlating linguistic units in Present-Day English, this paper views them also from a contrastive perspective, as the representative units of the competing relativization paradigms. In Late Middle English, *that, who,* and *which* were used sporadically, so it is important to analyse specific instances of the relative markers at first to provide a correct explanation of the phenomenon. Suarez-Gomez (2008) even uses the notion of "competition" to designate specific relations between the target relativization groups—invariable and pronominal relativization

paradigms. The linguist's initial intention in the study is to find out whether the introduction of the *wh*-relativizers was a cause or rather a consequence of OE relative pronouns' disappearance (Suarez-Gomez 2008: 339). The current research takes the findings of this empirical research into consideration and assumes that the establishment of the tendency to use the *wh*-words in the ME subordinate relative clauses was a logical step in the elaboration of linguistic development processes initialized in the OE period and actively developed in the ME period. At the same time, it is worth noting that selection of interrogatives was a grammatical innovation of that time because the OE syntax witnessed only demonstrative pronouns in such positions. When one looks at Examples 4 and 5, it is clear that *that* represented one relativization pattern and *who,* the pronominal one, was used in the equivalent subject positions within the relative clauses. Although *that* still dominated in the position of the relativizer at the beginning of the 16th century, first occurrences of the interrogative-based relative markers can be found in the 1530s.

(4) and y man [RC **that** hath his eye open] hath sayed / &; he hath sayed that heareth the.

(EEBO, Tyndale 1536).

(5) Chryst made answere: thou man [RC **who** hath ordayned me iudge or deuyder betwene you].

(EEBO, Marsilius of Padua 1535).

The LME cases 4 and 5 represent the *William Tyndale's Five Books of Moses* (the direct translation of the *Pentateuch* from Hebrew) and *The Defender of the Peace* by Marsilius Padua, which was dedicated to the sphere of the political thought of that period. Both texts were printed during the same period and they demonstrate the use of relative markers from different relativization paradigms in the same syntactic roles. Both texts demonstrate that *that* and *who* were used in the equivalent SU positions within the relative subordinate clauses. They relativize the animate antecedent *man* and therefore, one can state that their positions are equal. The current research investigates this phenomenon and answers why this was possible and what the causes of  the introduction of the *wh*-pronouns in the LME relative clause were. Abrupt transitions from one systematic use of the respective units to more advanced means of relativization characterized neither OE syntax nor ME grammatical patterns. All transformations and transitional phases took place in a gradual manner. The phenomena of interference where different features or tendencies could be combined serve as the main markers of constant linguistic change and development. Therefore, it is important to pay attention to those linguistic phenomena that were termed as "combinative." Such constructions

comprised features of preceding formulas, and at the same time, presented elements that were further elaborated on during the development of LME complex sentence structure. Expression of the relativeness changed its formal properties, whereas functions and assigned roles remained the same. Confusion in the use of different relative markers in the LME period can be explained by the deeper process of restructuring and shifts in the paradigms of demonstrative and relative units. Whereas a clearer distinction between phenomena of these two groups evolved in the later stages of grammatical progress, such relations interfered with each other in the older texts. Transitional phenomena require a precise analytical approach because, as mentioned above, they are the best identifiers of intensive changes in the language structure. Interference and confused use of different units in the same position prove the dynamic nature of the linguistic change process. They also reveal all possible details and ways that the use of different relativization means could decrease, or conversely, become strengthened due to certain intra- and extra-lingual factors.

Examples 4 and 5 demonstrate the target phenomenon and the subject of the current work: introduction of the *wh*-pronoun in the position of the invariable *that* in the structure of LME relative clauses. As soon as this tendency appeared, it developed quite dynamically, and the task of the current research is to trace the main phases of such progress and determine what the cause and consequence of the linguistic change were. One should mention that selection of the target research objects out of the corpus texts is not an easy procedure, because it requires the introduction of an effective search syntax. The textual evidence part of this work will further develop the hypotheses and ideas expressed in the introduction. Although theoretical data and the selected research approaches condition the corpus search and analysis, the final assumptions are based on the analysis of frequencies of *that, who, whom,* and *which*. The current research accounts for the transformational processes in general, and at the same time, it also focuses on the introduction of the *wh*-pronouns in the structure of the relative clause in Late Middle English and Early Modern English.

## 1.2 The data

To provide an efficient analysis of the above-described phenomenon, it is important to find the material which is maximally relevant for the study. Although there are many significant and influential events in the history of the English language, one should emphasize that printing became the main driving force for further development and codification of the specific linguistic norms and social embedding of certain constructions in human communication. Textual evidence for this analysis was chosen based on the necessity to find representative texts,

both religious and secular, taken from different spheres of human activity within the designated period. The corpus *Early English Books Online* can satisfy the main purposes and the focus of the current research, because it aims to observe the process of the gradual change and codification of linguistic norms. Therefore, this research examines the period of English language development between the 1470s and 1690s. One can designate this period as the one of Late Middle English and Early Modern English. Therefore, transitional phenomena are discussed as those having marked the boundaries between two significant periods of English language development. Specific linguistic phenomena and changes characterize the relevant historical periods in the development of English. The division of the history of English into such periods as Middle English and Early Modern English can serve the purpose of systematization, and the development of English relativizers has become one of the important highlights of the ME period. Editors and authors of *The Cambridge History of the English Language* (2000) do not use terms such as "Old English," "Middle English," "Early Modern English," and others in volume titles, but divide the publications about different periods by specific dates. Lass (2000) states that the division of different historical periods is rather relative, so the author suggests marking various periods relevant for language development by specific phenomena or processes. For example, he suggests that "everybody seems to agree that Old = (at least) preserved inflections and gender, and Middle = (at least) merger of inflectional vowels and 'confusion' leading to loss of case distinctions and grammatical gender" (Lass 2000: 20). The distinction between Old English as the period with the full inflections and Middle English with levelled ones makes sense, and based on such an approach one can state that the Old English = the declinable paradigm of relativizers *se, seo, þæt,* whereas Middle English = the indeclinable *that* and introduction of the interrogative pronouns as relative markers in the relative clause. The period studied in this paper begins with the introduction of the first printed books, which appeared in the late 1470s. Lass (2008) further explains that one can eventually use such conventional names as "the Middle Ages," "the Renaissance," "the Reformation," "the Enlightenment" and "the start of the Romantic period" when referring to three centuries between 1476 and 1776 (Lass 2008: 1). These terms present the target period in a rather positive direction—the epoch of linguistic development, changes, transformation, and revitalization. Such terms as Late Middle English and Early Modern English will be used to generalize the studied timespan and emphasize that pronominal relativizers were finally embedded into the structure of the English sentence on the border between two important stages of its development.

To discuss how the *wh*-relative clauses were introduced and developed, it is necessary to analyse the linguistic situation in England of the 14th century. Such an idea allows one to understand the causal and consequential relations between certain linguistic processes within the period of Late Middle English and Early Modern English. There was a significant decrease in the use of French as the main written language within society. Literate French speakers became bilingual as time progressed because they gradually switched to English as a leading means of communication. English started to be used as the main instrument for the expression and information exchange in most spheres of social life, and the active writing in English marked the transition to the 15th century. Emonds and Havranova (2014) stated in their work on the diachronic development of English relativizers that "from this perspective, Grammar Competition between French and English in 14th century England is entirely expected. And this competition is what brought back into Middle English the lost Indo-European use of *wh*-words to introduce relative clauses" (Emonds & Havranova 2014: 157). The authors also acknowledge the significant influence of the French syntax on the English one, because written texts were produced by literate authors who had previously used French as the only written language. Introduction of printing in England marked a very important historical and social change during that period and can be viewed as a new epoch in the evolution of orthographic, morphological, syntactic, semantic, and further levels of English. Francophone speakers who switched to English as the main instrument of communication could indeed provide a great influence on the development of the morphological and syntactic system of English. The same idea has been expressed by Suarez-Gomez (2008), who also mentions the intensive Latin and French influences within the competition between demonstrative *that* and interrogatives as relativizers in the Middle English. This hypothesis can be supported not only by the fact that well-educated people who wrote the texts in Late Middle English and Early Modern English previously spoke French, but also by the nature of the printed texts, represented in the EEBO. A lot of texts are translations from the Latin or French originals and therefore, specific patterns could be preserved on the principle of analogy. "It is undeniable that French and Latin could have played an important role in the expansion, development and increase in the frequency of *wh*-words as adnominal relative pronouns" (Suarez-Gomez 2008: 341). The current research does not review such a tendency in the context of the analysed texts, and therefore, this idea has been mentioned as a possible direction in the explanation of why and how the use of the *wh*-pronouns as relative markers was intensified. The influence of foreign languages is taken into account, but this research focuses on the internal linguistic processes and changes.

The events and processes mentioned above can be also used to justify the choice of the target corpus, and it is assumed that the pronominal relativization strategy was fully embedded at the end of the 15th century. The analysis of the textual evidence allows a conclusion of how frequently and which syntactic roles in the relative clause were taken by the *wh*-relatives. The analysis is based on the quantitative and qualitative analysis of the relative pronouns intensively used in the designated period of language development. The chosen source, the online corpus *Early English Books Online*, is representative of several eras and the research focus, in this case, is shifted from the comparison between specific periods to the analysis of the particular phenomena throughout several important phases of the language transformation. The introduction of printing by William Caxton in London is taken as the starting point of the analysed period, and there was no one distinct variety of English which could serve as an example of the normative language during that period. Texts from the EBBO serve as reliable and representative sources for the current linguistic analysis. Printing became the primary way to codify linguistic norms and standards. Therefore, the chosen corpus will reliably reflect the main tendencies in ME syntax transformation. Numerous texts of different authors, genres, and regions can be observed as representative and covering the most important material from the period. The elements of Shakespearean language are also interesting because these texts served as a separate important form for the codification of the language tradition. William Shakespeare's comedies and tragedies also provide a distinct account of real language use, because dramatic texts were written for oral performance in front of more educated viewers and a lay audience at the same time. Therefore, the linguistic phenomena in such compositions must be regarded as the reliable material for the discussion of the main tendencies in EModE evolution.

The corpus *Early English Books Online* is a source for linguistic research which contains 24,971 texts with 755,078,402 words from the period between the 1470s and 1690s. This period is of particular interest for linguistic research because it already closely resembles the features of Present-Day English, but at the same time, it largely preserves the phenomena from the preceding epochs of the language development. Unlike preceding transitional periods, the time between the late 15th and 17th century can be characterized by a comparatively high level of homogeneity and consistency as far as spelling is concerned. At the same time, through further transformational processes in the syntax and morphology, it is possible to find out how the language structure was elaborated. Surely, grammatical, lexical, morphological, and syntactic features of the language were developed and advanced through the opportunity to present texts in a printed form. The edition of *The Canterbury Tales* by Chaucer is known to be

the first book printed by Caxton. This fact serves as reliable evidence for the high importance of the book, which represented an ironic image of the Church and the entire society. Texts in the EEBO corpus represent different genres including science, politics, religion, philosophy, and others. The function "Virtual Corpora" allows selecting texts by such information as date, author, and title, and demonstrates that there are 1396 different topics represented within the corpus. The most frequent ones are sermons, ballads, and histories of the Civil War, Charles II, the Commonwealth, the Catholic Church, Christian life, politics, and others.

## 1.3 The approach

The mentioned Accessibility Hierarchy theory and the cognitive interpretation regarding the development of the relativization strategies will be considered in this thesis, and it is important to define basic assumptions to correctly identify the target linguistic units in the selected texts. One should examine how the interrogatives behaved in their initial non-relative positions to understand how they gradually acquired new properties and meanings within the LME sentence. Specific search syntax will be suggested in the textual evidence section in order to obtain the most reliable occurrences of the target relative clauses. The "Chart" function in the EEBO corpus identifies the normalized frequencies of the target relativizers. Simple search syntax is used, accounting for the possible syntactic environment to obtain maximally reliable and adequate occurrences for the analysis. The current search aims for the detection of *that* and the *wh*-relatives in different syntactic roles. The most famous and widely used approach utilized in the above- and further-mentioned researches is the one based on the hypothesis about the more and less accessible syntactic roles of the relative markers in the relative clause. This theoretical principle suggests that there is a specific gradation or line of tendency for how specific linguistic units enter the structure of the English language. Comrie and Kennan's (1972) theoretical approach has been utilized in many other empirical studies concerning the topic of relativization. Their definition of the relative clause, principle of constraint formations, and the Accessibility Hierarchy are considered in the current work's analytical discussion. This approach suggests that the target linguistic objects tended to enter the structure of the language according to a certain pattern, and, for example, the interrogative-based relative markers took the DO and PC syntactic roles at first, whereas the SU role was still frequently performed by the invariable relativizer. More precisely, three basic Hierarchy Constraints are presented to define the conditions a certain language must meet in order to apply the AH principles. Old English, Middle English, and Modern English fulfil these basic requirements: they all can relativize the noun phrases in the position of the subject, their relativization strategies apply to

the continuous segment of the AH line, and as soon as a relativization mode in English applies to one point presented on the AH pivot, it can also apply to any lower point on it (Comrie & Keenan 1977: 67). This theory also applies to the accessibility of the syntactic roles in the relative clause. The behaviour of the *wh*-relatives seems to be rather paradoxical since they entered the structure of the LME sentence from the least accessible positions. This interesting point is one of the central questions of the current linguistic inquiry because this tendency can be explained by the very formal and semantic nature of the target linguistic phenomena. As it has been mentioned, the logical interpretation of such a tendency can also be based on the fact that the invariable *that* tended to gradually leave the positions and started from the least accessible points. The *wh*-forms were first introduced in the less accessible functions within the relative clause. This statement will be verified in the textual evidence part of the current research because there could have been certain deviations and irregularities. Additional meanings and specifications in the LME sentence required new syntactic units to convey them. Whereas the antecedents in earlier stages of English language evolution were less specified, the Late Middle English already resembled the PDE syntactic patterns and, therefore, the morphosyntactic and semantic specification must be viewed as a very important step in the development of the LME sentence. The following example from the first half of the 16th century demonstrates how *that* behaved within the relative clause:

(6) the man [RC **that** is renewed and borne ageyn, and restored to god by his grace], sayth in the fyrst place (…).                                                                                      (EEBO, Cyprian 1539).

It is possible to demonstrate the nature of the relative sentence in Example 6 from *A sermon of S. Cyprian made on the Lordes prayer that is to wytte, the Paternostre.* This extract illustrates how the invariable *that* performed the most easily accessible syntactic position of the subject. One can state that the position of subject was the most accessible, and it is assumed that the invariable *that* was the most resistant for substitution in this particular role. The chosen approach requires a precise and correct definition of the syntactic role for the relative marker within the relative clause of the LME complex sentence. It is necessary to select the representative relative clause according to the above-mentioned formal properties, define the syntactic role of the relativizer, and only then refer to the specific behaviour of the relative marker as normative or abnormal, regular or infrequent. This research assumes that a syntactic construction is defined as a relative clause if it can specify a certain set of objects delineated by the noun phrase in the principle clause. The latter represents the so-called domain of

relativization, and can be rather vast or presented only by a limited set of objects, whereas the following restricting sentence limits this entity to a subset (Comrie & Keenan 1972: 63). Example 6 from the LME text can be clearly defined as the relative clause. *The man* is the domain of this relativization structure with the head NP *man.* The restricting element is presented by *that is renewed (...)*, containing the LME relative marker *that.* The domain of relativization must include the relativized object, and the given restricting sentence must be necessarily true. Such a definition and view on the relative marker is regarded as the basic one in current research, and further qualitative analysis of the selected constructions is performed upon this particular assumption. The relative marker *that* correlates with the NP *man.* Closs-Traugott (1992) defined noun phrases as "phrasal units consisting of a noun along with optional modifiers: demonstrative, quantifier and adjective phrase, itself a phrase consisting of an adjective along with an optional intensifier" (Closs-Traugott 1992: 171). Such optional modifiers will also be accounted for if a more profound analysis of the relativizing mechanism is needed in a specific case.

## 1.4 Goals and limitations

The primary goal of the current research is to observe how pronominal relativizers *who, which,* and *whom* entered the structure of Late Middle English and Early Modern English, what the main processes and parallel modes of relativization were within the RC construction, and what conditions led to the strong embedding of the interrogative relativizers into the English syntactic system. It also aims to elucidate whether the pronominal and invariable relativization paradigms co-existed in a normal manner or whether there was a competition between these two strategies. Analysis of the peculiarities in the use of *that* and the *wh*-words can shed light on the question of why the pronominal objects took certain syntactic positions and why they entered the system from the least accessible positions. The current research also aims to answer the question: what is the direction of the causal-consequential relations in the process of the weakening of *that* in certain positions on the one hand, and the strengthening of the *wh*-paradigm in the relative clause on the other. This research accepts the idea that numerous functions and polysemy of *that* as a relativizer and complementizer in the LME period required introduction of new linguistic elements. It assumes that the *wh*-pronouns were introduced into the relative clause for the sake of specification and expression of the additional meanings necessary for the full presentation of the antecedents in the principal clauses. More explicit relativizing units were required.

Quantitative analysis of the corpus material will allow extracting the most relevant and representative data to describe the central tendencies in the LME relativization system and nature of LME and EModE relative markers in particular. However, the complex nature and co-reference of the relativizers with the NPs requires a more profound analysis of the syntactic relations within the target constructions. The current research uses an effective search system in order to select the relevant occurrences of the *wh*-relatives in the same syntactic conditions. It is important to provide a search syntax which will fully prevent confusion between the syntactic roles of the relativized NPs and the relative markers themselves. The analysis of the textual evidence must be focused on the syntactic roles of the relativizers.

As it has been mentioned, the following corpus analysis will investigate which kind of antecedents were followed by the *wh*-words from the beginning and examine the semantic structure of the respective antecedents. Limitations of the current investigation are caused by the fact that qualitative analysis is needed to discuss how the animacy parameter was activated during the examined period. Of course, this procedure is very time-consuming and requires careful consideration of the particular construction, but at the same time, the restriction of this selection to the first ten antecedents allows the optimization of the procedure and the preservation of reliable and representative results of the search. This research can serve as the first step in the study of the LME relativizers within the EEBO corpus and future investigations and implementations of new methods and approaches, upgrading this kind of linguistic description. Every statement and conclusion which will be provided in the textual evidence part of the current work is suggested as hypothetical because further in-depth analysis is required to verify the suggested ideas.

## 1.5 The agenda

The agenda of this research is based on the assumption that the LME and EModE relativization system reflected the one of Old English to a great extent. However, it is important to realize that this was a functional, rather than formal, similarity. The same, but less specified, syntactic relations in the OE period were expressed by different linguistic units in the LME texts. The entire analysis is based on the dichotomy which have existed in all stages of English language development—the distinction between the invariable and pronominal relative markers. These two basic modes of relativization express distinct grammatical and semantic relations, but there was a period in language development when they were applied in equivalent contexts. This research analyses that time and makes an attempt to clarify why the simultaneous use was possible in certain positions and structures. Another important point is the utilization of the

accessibility approach to produce plausible generalization about the tendencies of the language development in the EEBO corpus. Thus, it is possible to set a clear connection between the subject of the investigation and the analytical instruments for the logical commentary on the obtained textual evidence. There are several objectives I have by now defined as important for my thesis:

- to introduce an effective search syntax and select representative examples which can clearly illustrate the introduction and elaboration of the target pronominal relativizers in LME and EModE relative clauses;

- to observe and analyse in which context and syntactic roles the *wh*-pronouns were used the most frequently and how *who, whom,* and *which* were used at the very beginning of their introduction;

- to analyse and hypothesize at what period of time and in which manner the *wh*-relatives started to actively supplant the invariable *that* in the LME relative clause;

- to find evidence whether the *wh*-forms were indeed first introduced in the less accessible syntactic roles such as PCs within the PPs and DO rather than SU;

- to find out whether the animacy parameter was activated and whether being case-inflected allowed the *wh*-relatives to fill the functional gaps left by the disappearance of the OE pronominal relative markers.

Such an agenda will allow the systematic analysis of the material from the EEBO corpus, account for important theoretical information which has been generated by previous studies, and at the same time, suggest an updated, individual explanation of the development tendencies in the LME relative clause. It reflects the chosen approach and demonstrates how empirical findings can be successfully applied to the current discussion. Examples from the EEBO should be selected based on the mentioned parameters and factors to provide as detailed an overview as possible.


## 2. The relativization strategy

History of the English language cannot be strictly divided into certain periods and one cannot state that a certain change was introduced at a very specific point of time. The language gradually developed and changed over time due to social interaction, technological development, world integration processes, and many other factors. However, there were significant transformations in the history of the English language which designated a new era in the evolution of certain phonological, morphological, lexical, and syntactic structures. Scholars have traditionally connected the beginning and end of periods in the language

development to some important historical social events, and the ME epoch has been identified as the one between the Norman Conquest in 1066 and the approximate date of 1485 when the first Tudor king Henry VII succeeded to the throne. When analysing the meaning of these events for language development, Hogg (1992) notes that historical changes had rather a long-term effect, not an immediate one. The Norman Conquest of English territories in 1066 provided a great influence on the local culture, but reference to this date as the beginning of the ME period is more symbolic because the gradual impact on the cultural patterns of England is implied (Hogg 1992: 9). The current research accounts for these realities and focuses on the ME period as a transitional time between the Old English and Modern English. Changes of the relativization strategies which serve as the central subject of this investigation are viewed as the ones having taken place during this intermediate phase. However, they cannot be studied in isolation from the preceding and following periods, because causative-consequential relations explain certain processes within the introduction of new relativizers in the English sentence. The Old English West Saxon scribal standard was collapsing during the Late Old English period, and development of various writing standards in different areas eventually led to a high degree of diversity in this respect. The factor of orthographic variability should be taken into account, and a great number of distinct spellings for the ME relativizers impose further complication on analysis of the corpus data. Blake (1992) notes that copying of the manuscripts very often resulted in the mixing of various dialects, but also explains that each particular standard in writing reflects different conventions which represented combinations of traditional, local, and national features. The scholar emphasizes that local and traditional properties were more likely to be reflected in written texts, and the national ones gained importance later in the fifteenth century (Blake 1992: 13). The Old English can be characterized by different relativization strategies, and it used inflected demonstratives in the position of the relative markers. After the case inflections started to decline in the grammatical system of the OE, the *wh*-relatives began to gradually enter the system of the Late Old English and Early Middle English.

Introduction of the interrogative pronouns in the position of relativizers has been discussed as an important change and event of the language development. Suarez (2012) states that there have been three main types of relativization strategies in each stage of the history of English. These were pronominal, zero, and the so-called invariable relativization strategies. As for the point where *who* and *which* appeared, the author has argued that most of the previous linguistic research regarding this particular issue has focused "on the expansion of the *wh*-pronominal relativizers from LME onwards at the expense of OE pronominal relativizers

*se/seo/þæt*" (Suarez 2012: 80). As mentioned above, there has been a hypothesis that French and Latin are the languages which caused the tendency to use *wh*-words as adnominal relative pronouns, and influenced the introduction of the interrogatives as relative markers to a great extent. The linguist has studied all tokens of *þe* and *that* in the *Helsinki Corpus of English Texts.* To observe how the pronominal relativization strategy developed and how *who* and *which* started to substitute the invariable relativizer *that* in the LME period, it is important to take the specific hypothesis as the starting point. There was a direct dependence between the manner of introduction of the *wh*-relatives in Late Middle English and the accessibility of their syntactic roles in the relative clause.

Suarez-Gomez (2008) suggests accounting for another aspect when analysing the structure of the relative clauses in Early English, and argues that there is a correlation between the word order type and type of the relative clause. According to the researcher's initial assumption, there is a tendency for verb-object if a relativizer introducing a relative clause is represented by the pronominal item, and alternatively, the indeclinable relativizer *that* can be associated with the object-verb arrangement. However, it is likely to have been true only for the period of the OE development. This means that both relativization strategies favoured the verb-non-final word order in the later stages of English syntax development. Besides, these word order types are also believed to be connected with the notion of restrictiveness in a sentence (Suarez-Gomez 2008: 15). The work of Suarez-Gomez (2008) is based on the study of the OE relativizers *se* and *seþe*, and the author only mentions that from the early ME period onwards, invariable *that* and *wh*-words started to be simultaneously used as relativizers. This assumption was supported by Suarez-Gomez (2008) in another paper on the distribution of respective elements as a part of the pronominal relativization strategies. This research investigates whether the *wh*-words can be considered to be the cause or consequence of the disappearance of the above-mentioned OE relative pronouns. According to more recent studies conducted within the linguistic research projects at the Palacky University in the Czech Republic, none of the three above-mentioned relativization strategies in Middle English, including the invariant, zero, and pronominal ones, directly continued the one represented by *þe* in Old English. The scholar Emonds (2014) has introduced a very interesting hypothesis based on the assumption that LME and EModE relative markers stemmed not from Old English directly, but rather from Old Scandinavian which was spoken in England during that period. The native syntactic system of the OE was changed for that of the Anglicized Danes and the OE invariant *þe* was fused with "the unmarked Danish subordinating complementizer *at* 'that' That was their new way to introduce the relative clauses of *þe+at.* Since the Early Middle

English, like the Old Norse but unlike the Old English, completely lacked diphthongs with low off-glides (…), *þe+at* naturally came to be pronounced and written as *that*" (Emonds & Havranova 2014: 152). Of course, such an approach requires further thorough consideration, but the current research will not further account for it and, rather, concentrates on the internal linguistic processes which caused changes in the relative clause. It is important to mention the notion of grammar competition between Old English and Old Norse. The term "competition" is quite frequently used in the context of historical linguistics because indeed, today's language use is the result of establishing the superiority of certain units and constructions over others. The same word is used in the context of competition between different relativization strategies and therefore, one needs to understand why a speaker preferred a certain construction depending on further social and individual circumstances.

## 2.1 The relative clause

The correct definition of the target linguistic units is crucial for the current investigation, and it is important to determine certain properties of the relative clauses which help to identify these constructions in the selected texts. Comrie and Keenan (1977) elaborate the above-discussed Accessibility Hierarchy and provide a precise explanation what a relative clause is. According to this approach, a syntactic unit can be identified as RC in the case that it specifies a set of certain objects. The entity defined by the head NP is called the *domain* of relativization and refers to a larger set of items, whereas a restricting sentence narrows this set and designates which objects belong to it (Comrie & Keenan 1977:63). There is a strong linkage between two clauses on the syntactic and semantic levels and therefore, there is a necessity to analyse all these aspects in the selected material. First of all, it is important to note that the RC is a kind of subordinate clause within the complex sentence structure. This means that it is attached to the main clause and can make sense only if read with that main clause. Moreover, one can also define it as a kind of adjective subordinate clause, because it adds some information and modifies the NP in the main clause. The modified element in the main clause is called the antecedent and depending on its semantic and grammatical nature, a certain relative marker must be selected to express the meaning of relation. The relative markers and, in this particular study, the relative pronouns, are usually brought to the beginning of the RC and in such a way that they usually mark the border between two parts of a complex sentence. Such a close position and attachment of the relativizing construction allows an emphasis of the interdependence and tight co-reference between the units.

The structure of relative clauses also evolved with time, and various factors were involved in the process. Fischer (1992) provided a general overview of the syntax during the ME period and noted that the transformations within the RC during that period were remarkable and significant for the entire history of relativization in the English language. The scholar mentions two parameters which were at work in the context of relative marker selection. These are the so-called "animacy" and "information" parameters, and based on these two factors, a speaker consciously or subconsciously chooses a specific relative marker. The animacy parameter predefines the choice of *who* and *whom* against *which* and *that,* whereas the information parameter allows assessing whether one should use the invariable *that* or the *wh*-pronoun to relativize the NP in the principal clause. "*That* is the prototypical relativizer in restrictive clauses, which can overrule the animacy parameter by replacing *who* after a personal antecedent. *That* is barred from non-restrictive clauses; here *who* and *which* are used in accordance with the animacy parameter" (Fischer 1992: 295). The current research is based on such generalizations and takes these phenomena and correlations as significant regularities in the English language. The information parameter pre-defined the intonation and self-sufficiency of the principal clause that made it possible to discuss the development of the *wh*-relatives caused by the necessity to mark such a distinction. Suarez-Gomez (2006) provides research on the RC position throughout history and notes that the movement of the RC to the left or right side of the main clause was also a matter of diachronic change. This investigation even mentions an idea that "relative clauses in the English language evolved from structures which were adjoined to the main clause in early English and extraposed from the antecedent to highly integrated or intraposed structures within the main clause in PDE" (Suarez-Gomez 2006: 12). Such a claim can be also accounted for in the current study to interpret specific behaviour of the relativizers in earlier stages of English language development. Thus, two very important tendencies must be highlighted: the *wh*-forms entered the ME relative clause for the sake of meaning specification, and with time, the level of the RC integration within the complex sentence grew intensively. In this context, one can also mention the RC definition presented by Suarez-Gomez (2006), which emphasizes that the RC as a specific type of subordinate clause performs the function of an adjective and can even be labelled as a subordinate adjective clause (Suarez-Gomez 2006: 24). Whereas Hermann (2008) emphasizes the connection of co-reference between the NP and the relative marker, Suarez-Gomez (2006) focuses on the nature of the relative clause, which is, indeed, adjectival. This means that a certain relative unit is usually to characterize or describe the antecedent present in the main clause. All transformations of the relative clause in the history of English are associated with deeper and

more profound changes, such as the loss of inflections. Typological studies further shift the focus to the comparison between various languages, and there is an idea that Late Old English and Early Middle English were more similar to Modern German than to Present-Day English. This fact can be verified when analysing the RC where the OE relativizer, for example, is in the full agreement with its antecedent. The textual evidence part of the current research demonstrates various instances of the RC realization during the period of EEBO production. Concerning the ordinary position of the relative pronouns in the ME sentence, one can specify that they tend to be put in the initial position of the clause irrespective of the syntactic function they realize. This feature makes it easier to identify the boundary between the main and respective relative clauses. The current research reviews only the so-called post-nominal relative clauses and disregards the free ones. This means that only complex sentences with a principal clause including the relativized noun phrase are considered. Free relative clauses are usually introduced by such relative markers as *what, where,* and *when*, and they do not require the direct relation to the domain of relativization. Unlike these units, *who, which,* and *whom* presuppose the presence of certain reference obligations. It is important to analyse the nature and strength of the relation between the RC and NP in the principal units to understand why such relative pronouns entered the system and were later codified in the syntax of English language.

Relative clauses are always attached to the principal and the target units, while relativizers stay in a rather tight correlation with the antecedents introduced by the main clauses. As mentioned above, there is another type of RC in the English language, the so-called free relative clauses. It is useful to discuss this kind of construction to realize how antecedents and relativizers can interact differently. Free relative clauses usually contain the antecedents within their body, which also means that the antecedent is equivalent to or fused with the relative marker. The following examples illustrate such FRs found in the EEBO corpus:

(7) you may say [RC **what** you like]: but beleeue me, you will dye a begger for this.

(EEBO, Fernando de Rojas 1631)

(8) [RC **who** you see] is very carefull in enjoyning.

(EEBO, Nicholas Bernard 1642)

Examples 7 and 8 show the very special kind of RCs which are called free since they can exist independently and are not connected with the antecedents in the main clauses. *What* is a rather frequent relativizer in this context, whereas *who* is used much more rarely and does not seem

to be very natural within the construction. Another important aspect one can pay attention to is the anaphoric position of such a relative clause. Caponigro and Patterson (2015) wrote an interesting article on the "puzzling" status of *who* in such constructions. The free relative can also be defined as the embedded non-interrogative clause with the *wh*-word. From Examples 7 and 8, one can state that *who,* although used rather rarely, performs the role of a subject, whereas *what* is more likely to be used in the positions of direct object and prepositional complement. Thus, the position of subject is also less acceptable than the other two in this context; this conclusion is made by Caporingo and Patterson (2015) as well. "Further, the results showed that this reduced acceptability is sensitive to the grammatical position of the free relative within the matrix clause. The overall average acceptability of sentences with *who* free relatives in object position" (Caporingo & Patterson 2015: 343). These data are useful for the current research because they provide a further in-depth overview of the RC nature and structure. One should note that the free relatives are not analysed in the textual evidence part of this paper.

## 2.2 The nature of the relativizers

Although the central objects of the current research, namely, relativizers, have been mentioned many times and it is quite clear that there is a distinction between the relative markers of different origins, it is still nevertheless useful to discuss the nature of them in detail. At first sight, it is quite clear that the invariable relativizer *that* is demonstrative in its very nature, whereas the *wh*-relatives *who, which,* and *whom* stem from the interrogative pronouns. If one looks at the question superficially, this statement is true and it is rather easy to prove its basic idea. Previous studies and discussions have provided a more in-depth analysis of these matters, and therefore, it is worth analysing each group of the relativizers separately. The current research assumes that the pronominal relative markers allow more flexibility and specification of the NP in the main clause, whereas *that* has always been used to be a multifunctional unit which is used in a more general and restrictive context, as far as the RC is concerned. Although produced in 1986, the research on the relative markers in the OE, namely, the *Peterborough Chronicle,* by Dekeyser (1986) is a rather comprehensive account of the OE relativizers, their nature, basic tendencies, and syntactic behaviour. This work proves the fact that three mentioned strategies of relativization existed from the very beginning of the English language development. The fact that the investigation by Dekeyser (1986) was based on such a reliable and representative source as the *Peterborough Chronicle* shows that the conclusions of this examination are absolutely true. Of course, there have been numerous papers written since, but the gist, the main idea produced in the observation, has always remained the same. Concerning

the nature of the first relativizer *þe* in the OE and *þat/that* in the ME, one should note that the central and particular formal feature of this unit is its invariability. This means that there were no other forms or declined variants of this particular unit in various stages of the English language development. Both units originated from the deictic markers, and therefore, the nature of the ME *that* is very complex and requires further careful consideration. It is important to emphasize that the OE *þe* was even more multi-functional and its role cannot be limited to the relative marker only. *þe* was a complementizer, a general subordinator which was present in complex sentences with different subordinate types. Just as the *wh*-relatives were introduced into the LME syntactic system to compensate for the inability of *that* to specify the context and due to too many functions of this unit, the ME *þat* came about because of the functional overload of the OE *þe* (Fischer 1992: 293). Although such a conclusion was made a rather long time ago, it is still relevant in the current discussion and provides a plausible explanation for the transformational processes in general.

Rissanen (2000) continues the description of LME and EModE syntax from 1476–1776 and summarizes that "the earlier development of the inflected forms may be due to the lack of these forms with *that* and to the frequent use of the nominative *who* as a generalising relative 'whoever'" (Rissanen 2000: 293). This statement makes good sense when one looks for an answer to why *whom* and *which* were present in the earlier stages of English language development. The difference between the OE and ME invariable relative marker is not only its grammatical nature and functional load, but also the fact that *þe* was also used in the clause with subject-object-verb order, whereas *that* is found in the traditional sentence construction based on the subject-verb-object order. The relative clause was intensively elaborated closer to the Late Middle English and Early Modern English  and acquired the features of the PDE complex sentence with the relative component. The second strategy present in the OE texts and even more relevant for the current linguistic inquiry is the one represented by pronouns. According to Deykeser (1986), this "strategy is identical with the present-day (standard) German system: the relative marker is an anaphoric deictic pronoun, which agrees in number and gender with the antecedent NP: it consists of a four-case paradigm" (Deykeser 1986: 94). Such a tight co-reference can be further illustrated by the dual correlations between articles and relative pronouns in German: *der/wer, dem/wem, den/wen, das/was,* etc. In the ME language, pronominal relativizers are indeclinable and only one objective case has been preserved from the earlier stages of the language development. Thus, *whom* is the only declined form which has been used within the RC construction up to Present-Day English. According to Deykser (1986), the gap relativization strategy was also present in the period of Old English, but it was

not so widely spread as in the later stages, and in most cases was restricted to the RCs defining the NPs in the SU position (Deykser 1986: 95).

As one can see from the above-mentioned discussion, the division between invariable and pronominal relativizers within the RC construction was present in older periods of English development, but both relativization paradigms were represented by rather different linguistic units. Closs-Traugott (1992) contributed to the study of the OE syntax and referred to RCs as the important markers of profound linguistic changes. According to this work, "the pronominal relativizer in OE is the pronoun *se, seo, þæt 'that'*. It is normally inflected for the case of the relativised NP; it may be followed by the invariant particle *þe*" (Closs-Traugott 1992: 224), whereas the invariable relativizer in OE is introduced by the invariable particle *þe*, which "is most frequently used when the relativised NP serves as subject or object. However, it can also be used when the relativized NP would be dative" (Closs-Traugott 1992: 226). Already in this particular period, the question arises, whether *se* is demonstrative or relative. Independency of the unit has always been associated with the demonstrative nature, whereas dependency with the relativization pre-supposes a strong correlation between the NP and the relative marker. Such a distinction is also present in the ME context, but relative markers are expressed by other units: the invariable *that* which stemmed from the OE relativizers and the relative markers *who, which,* and *whom,* which stemmed from the interrogative pronouns and were quite suitable for the expression of the close correlation between the NP in the main clause and the relativizer in the subordinate one.

There are certain structural differences between the pronominal and invariable relativizers which can further explain not only the difference in their syntactic behaviour from the synchronic perspective, but also provide the arguments for observation of the units from the evolutionary diachronic perspective. In Old English, Middle English, Modern English, and Present-Day English, there are universal properties of the relative markers and relative clauses. It is important to state that the pronominal relativizers are case-marked unlike the invariable paradigm of relativization. This means that the *wh*-relatives in Late Middle English and Early Modern English can be also inflected (*whom*) when relativizing specific syntactic positions of the noun phrases. As early as in the 1470s, the indirect form *whom* appeared in the EEBO corpus and this serves as reliable evidence for the fact that it was present in the structure of the LME relative clause, before *who* was actively presented:

(9) and now thou woldist falsly be aboute to lue my lady [RC **whom** i loue and serue].

(EEBO, Geoffrey Chaucer 1477).

If one applies the same search syntax for *who,* it is found only for the first time in the 1520s. Of course, one cannot make conclusions based on one example, but this case clearly illustrates the tendency of the *wh*-relatives introduction and development in the syntactic system of the Late Middle English. The fact that *whom*, which took the position of the DO already in the 15<sup>th</sup> century, supports the idea that the *wh*-pronouns entered the RC construction from the less accessible syntactic roles. Chaucer (1477) already made the distinction in his texts, and *that* appeared frequently as a complementizer in his works. Example 9 demonstrates not only the correct use of *whom* in the position of the DO, but also a combination with the animate antecedent only. Whereas invariable forms *that* and *which* can follow antecedents of different nature, *whom* appears to relativize exclusively animate ones, and the following examples can illustrate this statement:

(10) what a preste sholde do yf the bysshop bydde hy curse a man [$_{RC}$ **whom** he holdeth vngylty].                                                                                                   (EEBO, Henry Parker 1496)

(11) all the goodnes yt is done in heselfe or in hem is only of god [$_{RC}$ **whom** he beholdeth as al].                                                                                                   (EEBO, Walter Hilton 1494).

(12) that we maye kyll him, for the soule of his brother [$_{RC}$ **whom** he hath slayne], and that we maye destroye the heyre also.                                                                     (EEBO, Miles Coverdale 1535).

All the examples from the end of the 15<sup>th</sup> and the beginning of the 16<sup>th</sup> centuries show that the pronominal relativizer *whom* had a rather well-defined position because it relativized the NPs of the animate nature and performed the syntactic role of the DO very frequently. This fact provides logical and reliable support for the idea that the syntactic positions which were left by *that* first*,* were also relativized by the *wh*-forms from the very beginning.

## 2.2.1 The invariable relativizer *that*: history and properties

Since the current paper observes the introduction and further development of the *wh*-relatives in Late Middle English and Early Modern English in the context of comparison with the invariable relativizing strategy, it is important to understand how the relative *that* emerged and what the causes of its gradual decrease of frequency in specific syntactic positions were. Suarez-Gomez (2012) presented a study on the clause linkage and actively developed the idea that the dominant functioning of *that* as a universal and primary relativizer was a result of two different procedures: decategorization and desemanticization of the OE demonstrative *þæt*. The current research focuses on this aspect and does not take Scandinavian or French influences into

account. The author means that the OE *þæt* was gradually losing its morphosyntactic features and deictic properties at the same time. This finally led to the introduction of *that* as a widespread relative marker in Middle English (Suarez-Gomez 2012: 142). Of course, the aspect of polysemy is important and one should remember that it has always functioned as a general marker of subordination and as a complementizer. Seppänen (2011) presents the article in the "Generative Theory and corpus studies," which provides data regarding the history and development of the relative *that.* The central controversy discussed in the work is the one arising from the question of how *that* originated as a relative marker. Seppänen (2011) mentions two basic hypotheses in this respect: the origin of the relative *that* from the OE pronominal *se, seo, þæt* on the one hand and its development from the ME conjunction *þæt* on the other. Such assumptions are based not only on the formal features and similar grammatical behaviour, but also on the functional aspect. The fact that *that* is also pronominal cannot be denied, and further investigation might support either of the suggested theories. Different facts contribute to the opposite perspective on the nature of *that* used within the structure of a complex sentence. Such formal characteristics as the lack of inflection and the inability to mark gender, case, or number are advantageous for those who treat *that* as a complementizer, whereas the fact that complementizers are non-referential plays a crucial role in the support of *that* as a relative marker. There is a clear and direct correlation between the invariable relative *that* and the antecedent it relativizes in the relative clause (Seppänen 2011: 36).

The fact that *that* has preserved the strong function of complementizer and relativizer until today, serves as evidence that it originated from both of the above-mentioned grammatical groups. When analysing the structure of the RC in Old English and Middle English, Seppänen (2011) produces a conclusion that "the word *that* must be treated as the same pronominal element regardless of its syntactic position in the relative clause, and this conclusion receives further confirmation from the observation that the *wh-* + *that* pattern produces the same effect on the status of the clause regardless of the syntactic position of the elements" (Seppänen 2011: 45). This statement can be further supported by the possibility to substitute the invariable *that* with a *wh*-word in the RCs. The current research emphasizes the nature of *that* as a relativizer because the primary focus is set on the phenomenon of relativization, namely, the correlation between the antecedent in the principal clause and relativizer in the relative clause. This linguistic unit is discussed in the context of competition between two basic relativization strategies: invariable and pronominal.

If one discusses the dichotomy in the respect of relativizer use, it is possible to state that each particular unit can compete with others. This means that there was a competition on a

higher level between invariable and pronominal relativizers concerning animateness of the NP and restrictive power of the RC, but one should also note that *who* and *which* competed in the way they both followed animate and animate NPs in the certain period when *who* and *whom* could be used in equivalent positions—that is, in the subjective and objective case. Therefore, the textual evidence part of the current paper sheds light on all these questions and demonstrates how the PDE relativization mechanism has finally been expanded and fixated in the grammar of the English language.

Another interesting aspect of the selected texts for the current investigation is the presence of Shakespeare's texts in the corpus, which shows that the period of the Early Modern English is also represented by so-called Shakespearean English. Sato (2015) focuses on the question of the use of *that* as a non-restrictive relativizer in the 16th and 17th century. Although this phenomenon relates to the last part of the Early English Books Online, the findings stated in the above-mentioned research can be rather interesting and relevant for the discussion of the functioning of *that* in the Late Middle English and Early Modern English. The study conducted by Sato (2015) has developed the idea that the use of specific relative markers also highly depends on the genre-specific features and therefore, is sensitive to different contextual details. The hypothesis stated by the scholar suggests that the non-restrictive *that* is found in *Romeo and Juliet,* and thus, characterizes the genre of tragedy (Sato 2015: 4). To provide the general picture of relative markers distribution, one should also mention the conclusion made by the author after the empirical analysis: "In both plays, *that* accounts for 66.1 percent of relative pronouns and the proportion of *which* and *who(m)* put together is 33.9 percent. Previous scholars have related the choice between *that* and the *wh*-pronouns in Early Modern English with the level of formality: the *wh*-pronouns were preferred in the formal style of writing while *that* remained common in informal and colloquial writing" (Sato 2015: 5).

## 2.2.2 The *wh*-relatives: features and syntactic behaviour

As mentioned above, the main goal of the research on LME and EModE relativizers is to analyse how the pronominal relativization strategy was introduced in the relative clause, how it co-existed with the invariable relativization pattern, and what factors influenced further development and formation of the PDE relativization system. While *that* originated from the *th*-stem which is demonstrative, *who, whom,* and *which* originated from the *wh*-stem which is, in its essence, interrogative. Such a difference implies from the very beginning a different connection and correlation type between the NP and respective relativizers. Rissanen (2000) suggests several theories on the question of why interrogative relative markers were well-

established in all types of non-restrictive RCs, mentioning the multifunctional load of *that*. The author also introduced an interesting idea based on extra-linguistic facts and claimed that this "development is in accordance both with the tendency to systematise the use of various grammatical forms in the course of the Early Modern English period and with the polite and formal expression of Tudor and Stuart society, which probably emphasised the observation of the 'personality' of the referent" (Rissanen 2000: 294). Such a hypothesis seems to contribute also to the entire idea of the antecedent specification in the context of relativization. The distinction between two groups of antecedents, animate and inanimate, allows emphasizing the personality and respect towards the relativized subject. It is necessary to discuss the nature of the *wh*-pronouns as relative markers to understand why they took specific syntactic positions and have been embedded into the syntactic structure of English language. Unlike *that*, which is multifunctional and allowed in most relative contexts, the *wh*-relatives are selected by a speaker according to certain norms. Of course, one does not analyse the nature of the antecedent or the character of information provided in the RC each time, but the correct patterns are acquired by speakers in childhood. The "correct" use of pronominal relativizers is a rather controversial notion, and therefore, it has been a subject of numerous discussions and debates on the status of the target units. Rules and restrictions are interpreted as necessary in specific contexts and modes of communication based on oral, written, genre, dialect, and many other extra-linguistic factors. Explanation of differences in this way allows for a certain degree of flexibility when a speaker can freely opt for a specific relative marker. However, there have always been more rigid rules in this respect and the basic grammar rules taught in every secondary school require one to use only the *wh*-relatives in non-restrictive RCs, *whom* in the objective case, and *who* with animate and *which* with inanimate antecedents. In the written form of communication, these rules are more or less followed, but one can find some deviations and irregularities in daily conversation.

When discussing the norms of the relativizer use, it is necessary to mention the notion of prescriptivism. Aarts (1994) conducted research a quarter of a century ago, and suggested an interesting approach to the question of prescriptive rules and linguistic reality. According to this work, prescriptive grammar of the 18th century already codified the "correct" use of the relative *wh*-pronouns. The author expressed the thought that there has been always a gap between the actual use of the language and what prescriptivists believed to be the norm. The current research pays attention to specific points of this work and particularly uses the formulation of Aarts (1994) regarding the "correct" use of two relative pronominal forms *who* and *whom* in the 18th century. The famous grammar rule that *who* must be used in the position

of SU only, whereas *whom* can be used as DO and complement a preposition, was exactly formulated in the period discussed and described by the scholar (Aarts 1994: 73). Such a prescription has remained, but in Present-Day English, *whom* refers to the formal style of communication and the informal mode allows the use of *who* in the positions of DO and PC as well. Such development and a certain kind of relaxation of the formulation have also been caused by certain intra- and extra-linguistic realms. Adamson (1992) also expressed the idea that the choice of a specific relative marker or strategy was tightly connected with the social status, and according to his findings, higher social groups preferred, for example, an invariable relativizer to the gap strategy to mark their distinctiveness and special status in the society (Adamson 1992: 123). The same principle can be applied to the explanation of why the *wh*-pronouns started to be opted for in certain positions, although *that* still existed as a strong relative marker in the period of Late Middle English and Early Modern English. Of course, such ideas can be well applied in further studies, but the fact that the EEBO corpus represents written and, of course, prestigious texts only, shows that the analysed material is representative concerning the norms and rules of the language use.

## 2.3 The Accessibility Hierarchy: movement of the *wh*-relatives

The current paper assumes that the syntactic role of the relative marker played a role in the introduction and development of the LME pronominal relativization strategy. The AH theory is discussed as a possible explanation of the syntactic relations in the target constructions. The first salient feature that proves the relativization role of *who, which,* and *that,* is a noun or pronoun preceding these linguistic units. *Whom* is, in most cases, preceded by a preposition and performs the role of prepositional complementizer within the prepositional phrase construction. The *wh*-elements start functioning as relativizers simultaneously with the widely spread, universal *that.* The invariable relative marker *that* gradually left the specific syntactic positions due to various factors. The chosen texts show that at the moment when *who* and *which* increased in their quantity, *that,* on the contrary, experienced a slight decrease in its frequency. According to Suarez-Gomez (2008), the syntactic functions of the respective relativizers are those relevant variables which must be analysed according to the Accessibility Hierarchy suggested by Comrie and Keenan in 1977 (Suarez-Gomez 2008: 345). As mentioned above, the pronominal relativizers demonstrate an abnormality to some extent, because they enter the RC from the least accessible positions marked on the AH pivot. This paper looks for the explanation of such a tendency and views this situation in constant connection with and reference to the preceding periods of English language development. The AH theory presupposes that the *wh*-relativizers

start being actively used through the basic and most accessible functions and are, in their turn, left vacant by the OE relativizers. The formal properties of the interrogative pronouns allow them to be flexible, take different syntactic positions, and become attached to various prepositions. This approach is discussed in the current research, and the principle of accessibility is used in the analysis of syntactic roles of the relative markers.

The syntactic role of PC is the most difficult to access and, therefore, requires more explicit means of relativization. The textual evidence demonstrates that the pronominal relativizers substituted the invariable *that* in the position of DO at the beginning. The relative clauses which are introduced by the pronominal relativizers allow a greater range of positions to be relativized in comparison with those which are introduced by indeclinable or gap relativizers. This principle is relevant not only for the target units represented by the *wh*-words, but also for other linguistic objects performing this function. Maxwell (1982) follows the agenda of the AH suggested by Comrie and Keenan (1977) to produce the so-called diachronic generalizations about various relativization strategies. According to the initial hypothesis of this study, if there are several relativization strategies in a language, they interact and significantly depend on each other. The author provides an observation that two competing strategies can overlap, one advancing and the other not receding. This is termed "s-overlap," and the two variants can be widely used in two different social settings representing the so-called "low" and "high" registers. The "low" strategy is likely to drive out the one which is used in more formal, official communication conditions (Maxwell 1982: 142). Such an approach to the explanation of how one relativization strategy can substitute another one has been utilized in numerous works. For example, Suarez (2008) applied Maxwell's (1982) diachronic generalizations to set the primary objectives in her research to investigate whether the introduction of the *wh*-relativizers was a consequence of or a cause for the weakening of the invariable *that,* and how the OE relativization strategy with the demonstrative *se/seo/þat* was gradually replaced by the new ME ones. The questions based on the provided universals include the trajectory of movement for a particular member of a paradigm across the AH, the receding process of older units being substituted by new ones, positions on the AH where these relativization units disappear, and finally, the consequences of the introduction of the new relativizers for the previously existing ones (Suarez 2008: 343). These issues are also raised in the current research, although the pronominal relativization strategy with the *wh*-words is emphasized. Whereas Suarez (2008) focuses on the OE relative pronouns *se* and *seþe* to illustrate how the syntactic units receded from the AH and took positions to the right, this paper

observes whether the *wh*-words have diachronically moved to the left and acquired new syntactic roles, finally reaching the subject.

This research focuses on the period of the English language development between the 1470s and 1690s. Although the first printed books and significant historical and social changes at that time could be viewed as a new epoch in the evolution of orthographic, morphological, syntactic, semantic, and further levels of English, it is rather difficult to place these changes strictly within one period and label them as either "Late Middle" or "Early Modern English." The chosen source for this research, the *EEBO* corpus, is representative of both of the eras, and the research focus, in this case, must be shifted from the comparison between specific periods to the analysis of the phenomenon development throughout several important phases of English language transformation. The chosen approach allows for flexibility of change consideration and analysis of the target units without tight connection and limitation to a specific historical period. The period of the text production in the EEBO coincides with the temporal division for English language development provided in *The Cambridge History of the English Language.* Previous studies refer to the 15th and 17th centuries as the time when significant changes in the English syntax took place and the relative clause underwent a serious transformation, having acquired the formal and functional features which characterized the structure until the PDE period.

# 3. Textual Evidence

Before one can present empirical part of the current work, it is necessary to introduce the primary sources of the research and delineate the period of the target texts production. As it has been already mentioned in the introductory section, the corpus *Early English Books Online* is a source for linguistic research, which contains 24,971 texts from the period between the 1470s and the 1690s. The results from the corpus can serve as reliable evidence for the linguistic changes mentioned in the theoretical part. The analysed texts were produced between the 1470s and 1690s and provide sufficient material for an overview how the pronominal relativization paradigm with the *wh*-words was introduced into the English language. The findings can also demonstrate whether this was a transition, or rather an elaboration of the syntactic system when the same positions were taken by different linguistic units to express further grammatical and lexical meanings. Printed books, as a new social phenomenon, enabled the codification of the linguistic norms and patterns which were used in the oral and written speech the most frequently. The corpus EEBO is a unique opportunity to get an idea which text types and genres were valued and therefore, printed the most often. Surely, grammatical, lexical, morphological and syntactic features of the language were elaborated and advanced trough the opportunity to present texts in the printed form. The texts in the given corpus can be characterized by a rather high level of homogeneity and consistency. The number of the texts increased with the time and therefore, the largest part of the corpus is material from the 17th century. The number of occurrences for each particular relativizer also increased and this can be explained by the growing number of the printed texts also.

The higher number of the occurrences in the later decades can be explained by the intensive development of the text printing. To obtain reliable results, the proportions of the relative markers will be calculated with the help of the normalized frequencies of the relativizers in different syntactic roles and the normalized frequencies of the respective relative clauses. The "Chart" function in the EEBO corpus returns normalized frequencies and these figures have been used for the analysis. The books represented different genres including science, politics, religion, philosophy and others. It is rather easy to examine how the language was intensively elaborated from the last quarter of the 15th to the end of the 17th century. According to Risannen (2000), the period from 1476 to 1776 was the time when the major syntactic changes took place. The author provides a plausible explanation, why the *wh*-pronouns were embedded into the structure of the RC during that time. According to the author, the functional overload of *that* served as a primary reason and condition for the intensive spread of the *wh*-forms. "When the connection between the antecedent and the relative link was loose,

the likelihood of ambiguity and misunderstanding of the meaning of *that* increased. Consequently, the *wh*-forms seem to be first established in the contexts of loose relative link – in continuative and sentential relative clauses" (Rissanen 2000: 295). Besides, the later texts, which already documented the instances of the *wh*-relatives, are much easier to interpret during the linguistic analysis and the research phenomena can be more easily detected. Invariability in the graphic forms contributes to the reliability of the textual evidence analysis and the produced conclusions in this research.

The structure of the empirical part reflects the discussion of the target linguistic phenomena in the theoretical one and therefore, it starts from the general overview of the relative clause in the EEBO corpus. Further, the focus is concentrated on the *wh*-relatives which represented the pronominal relativization line having started from the LME period onwards. This empirical part provides analysis of the results from the comparative perspective. The frequency of the relative *that* is viewed to answer the question of whether this unit was indeed gradually replaced by the *wh*-relatives in certain positions. Distinction between the animate and inanimate nature of the antecedents preceding the relative links of the demonstrative and interrogative nature has also been taken into account to state whether the animacy parameter played a role. The function of the information parameter has not been analysed specifically, but the search syntax with comma has allowed to make some conclusions regarding tendencies in restrictive and non-restrictive relative clauses. Properties and behaviour of the target *wh*-relatives have been also viewed independently from the observation of the invariable relativizer *that*. Relativizers of the demonstrative nature on the one side and interrogatives on the other, are presented as used in the same period, representative for different paradigms. Of course, it took some time before the *wh*-relativizers were fully introduced into the syntactic system of Late Middle English and the current research discovers the main tendencies in the behaviour of the pronominal relative links during Late Middle English and the Early Modern English. It is important to emphasize that the studied linguistic phenomenon could be already widely spread in oral speech, but still not codified through written or printed texts. The modern relativizers *that, who, which, whom* are used simultaneously in Present-Day English, chosen by speakers intuitively, but this choice is based on specific prescribed and non-prescribed grammatical rules. Before the prescriptions and general rules were set in the English language, there had been a certain kind of competition between the units on the earlier stages of the language development. Introduction of the pronominal relative markers became an important highlight in the language development and it is useful to examine this tendency in order to conclude how the modern use was shaped throughout centuries.

As it has been stated above, the current research assumes and it will be proven that there is relation between the rising frequency of the pronominal relative markers and the accessibility of their syntactic roles in relative clauses. This means that the morphosyntactic nature of the *wh*-relativizers determined the character, order and the overall process of their introduction. The Accessibility Hierarchy theory relates to the roles of the relativized antecedents and the syntactic positions of the relativized noun phrases will not be the subject of the current analysis. This research is aimed at the analysis of the syntactic roles of the relative markers. According to the main idea of the AH theory, it is possible to state that the *wh*-relatives took the less accessible syntactic roles in relative clauses at first. The pronominal relativization strategy is more explicit and therefore, the least accessible roles such as direct object and prepositional complement, required its sources at the earliest stages of the language development. The current empirical analysis will attempt to find rational justification for the following statements:

1. The *wh*-forms were used as relativizers from the ME period and they began to actively supplant the demonstrative counterpart *that* from the 15th century on.

2. The *wh*-forms were first introduced in the less accessible functions. This means that at first, they took the roles of the prepositional complements within the prepositional phrases, direct and indirect objects, rather than that of the subject. *That* was more resistant to the replacement by the *wh*-relatives in the role of the subject.

3. *That* and *which* are found with the animate and inanimate antecedents, whereas *who* and *whom* mainly with the animate ones.

4. The nominative relative form *who* lagged in the development into the relative marker when compared with other *wh*-relatives. It did not substitute *that* and *which* following the animate antecedents for a longer time after the *wh*-relativizers were introduced. Its frequent use as a relativizer in the role of the subject started from the beginning of the 16th century onwards.

The frequent and constantly increasing use of *which* and *whom* in the role of the prepositional complement within the prepositional phrase from the very beginning of the corpus can be explained by the fact that they can be preceded by prepositions, whereas *that* could not function as a complement of a preposition. *That* was combined with the prepositions mostly when acting as a demonstrative unit, whereas the Old English *se* and *seþe* took the role of the prepositional complement. The case-coding relative *who* and *which* were used in this position from the Late Middle English onwards. Being case-inflected allowed the *wh*-relatives to fill the functional gaps left by the recession and gradual disappearance of the OE pronominal relativizers.

## 3.1 Search syntax in the EEBO corpus

To conduct the quantitative analysis in the EEBO corpus, specific search syntax is suggested to obtain meaningful numbers and plausible results to either verify or disprove the above-mentioned statements. The "Chart" function of the corpus shows the occurrences of the searched units in each decade providing the raw and normalized frequencies. The latter will be used to calculate the relative proportions of *that, who, whom* and *which* in different syntactic roles. Syntactic environment in the relative clause is defined to obtain maximally reliable and adequate empirical evidence for the analysis. The current search aims at the detection of *that* and the *wh*-relatives in different syntactic roles. This will demonstrate that the rising frequency of *who, whom* and *which* is related to the accessibility of their syntactic roles. It will be possible to explain why the *wh*-forms entered the relative clause in certain order and manner.

As it has been mentioned already, the role of the subject in the relative clause is considered to be the most accessible and the relativizer *that* which functioned as the universal one during the ME period was more resistant to the replacement in this particular RC type. The following search syntax _nn* [REL] _v** is used to find subject relative markers. This syntax is based on the assumption that a relativizer is preceded by a noun phrase and followed by a verb. The inflected form *whom* is excluded since it cannot function as a subject in subordinate relative clause. The rise of the pronominal *who* and *which* from the 1470s till the 1690s is expected and it is assumed that the obtained results will demonstrate that the frequencies increased.

_nn* [that] _v**
_nn* [which] _v**
_nn* [who] _v**

The following examples demonstrate which constructions are returned when the suggested search syntax is applied:

(13) i haue shunned none of those things [RC **that** were for your profit].

(EEBO, Heinrich Bullinger, 1572).

(14) those thinges [RC **which** are good], they say are the vertues, Wisedome, Iustice, fortitude, and temperance. (EEBO, Thomas Rogers, 1576).

(15) but onely i hilde mine eyes fast vpon god [RC **who** is my heauenly iudge].

(EEBO, Jean Calvin, 1574).

These cases support the statement that the chosen syntax returns the target construction reliably. From the very first searches, it is clear that *which* began to intensively supplant the invariable *that* following animate and inanimate antecedents in restrictive and non-restrictive relative clauses. Examples 16 and 17 demonstrate this fact and *which* was clearly a multi-functional pronominal relativizer already in the 16th century. *Who* entered the pronominal relative paradigm later, but its development as a relative marker was very fast and dynamic. As mentioned already, the syntactic role of subject was the most accessible and *that* remained the dominant relative marker within this particular construction. A more detailed analysis of the returned occurrences will be provided in the following sections.

 (16) euen to those men [RC **which** are pure in herte].

(EEBO, George Joye, 1534).

(17) he sent Cardinall augustin triuulco as legate to the army [RC **which** was then in the field.

(EEBO, Francesco Guicciardini, 1579).

It is emphasized in the current research that all the obtained results must be viewed in the relation to the search syntax and the comparison is done based on the assumption that the same conditions are applied in the analysis of all relativizers. In order to provide maximally plausible and reliable conclusions, the frequency ratio of one relative marker to another is calculated to provide a clear picture of the development of the relative markers. Therefore, one takes the normalized frequency of one specific relativizer, divides it by the total normalized frequency of relative clauses with *that, who, whom* and *which* in one particular syntactic position and calculates the share of this relative marker among all relativizers. This will be demonstrated in the following discussion and graphs. All the target linguistic units *that, which, who, whom* are found in the function of the DO when the search syntax _nn* [REL] _p* is applied. *Who* was rather infrequent in the DO position, but such instances are found and can be interpreted as the transitional phenomena within the *wh*-forms introduction. The following search syntax was created with the idea that a relative marker is used in the syntactic role of the DO when preceded by a noun phrase and followed by a pronoun. It is not the exhaustive selection of the relative markers in this position. The proportions of *that, who, whom* and *which* will be provided to obtain plausible and reliable results.

_nn* [that] _p*

_nn* [which] _p*

_nn* [who] _p*
_nn* [whom] _p*


(18) let him assure himself that the king wold not start from the thing [RC **that** he had once begonne]. (EEBO, Arthur Golding, 1576).

(19) Neyther sayd any of them that ought of the things [RC **which** he possessed, was his owne].
(EEBO, Rudolf Gwalther, 1572).

(20) it was a man [RC **who** he had killed], and requesting them to helpe him to carry the same away. (EEBO, Robert Albott, 1599).

(21) this brought the Senatours, and noble men [RC **whom** they called patricians], into great suspition. (EEBO, Thomas North, 1579).


The applied search syntax will allow to obtain normalized frequencies of all relative clauses with the target relative markers and normalized frequency of each particular relativizer in the SU, DO and PC syntactic role. Whereas it was relatively easy to analyse the occurrences of the relative markers in the SU and DO roles, it is getting more complicated when one looks for the relative markers performing the role of the prepositional complement within the prepositional phrase. In this case, *that* and *who* are not analysed within the prepositional constructions, because it is assumed they cannot and are perform this function and follow prepositions. Therefore, *which* and *whom* were used rather frequently in the PC role and the following examples demonstrate this statement. The syntax is created with the assumption that the target *wh*-forms are preceded by noun phrases in principal clauses and by prepositions in subordinate relative ones. *Who* can be also found as a relative marker in such constructions and these rare instances will be discussed in the following sections.


_nn* _i* [which]
_nn* _i* [whom]


(22) about the time [RC **in which** our Priestes accustom'd are to pray].
(EEBO, Christopher Ocland, 1585).

(23) first, concerning the person [RC **to whom** these epistles are sent].
(EEBO, Arthur Dent, 1603).


Essentially, the selected occurrences do not fully reflect the relativization system of the Late Middle English and the Early Modern English, but the same syntax is applied equally for each

particular relative marker. The proportions of each relativizer in the specific context are analysed and this allows to make a balanced and reliable comparison of the frequencies. The received results provide insights into the process of the RC development during the studied period. The calculation of proportions of *that, who, whom* and *which* allows to see whether the invariable relativizer was indeed still very frequently used in the EEBO corpus. Comparison between the *wh*-relatives and the invariable *that* is provided for the constructions with relativizers in the SU and DO roles, whereas the PC role is viewed only when performed by the pronominal units.

## 3.2 Development of the relative clause in the EEBO: general tendencies

Review of the textual evidence from the EEBO corpus aims at detection and selection of the material which is the most relevant for the analysis of the discussed phenomena. The analysis of how the relative markers were distributed throughout the entire period allows to describe changes, deviations from general tendencies and target linguistic units from the diachronic perspective. To produce certain conclusions regarding the development of the LME and EModE pronominal relativizers, it is necessary to observe the structure of the relative clause in general. It has been already mentioned that a relative clause is either attached to the main clause or can be embedded within the subordinate clause. Therefore, it aims at modification of the information stated in the preceding part of the sentence. A noun phrase which is relativized is the subject to that modification and can be either animate or inanimate. There is a strong relation of co-reference between the relative marker and the relativized noun phrase. The rendered results demonstrate that the antecedents relativized by *that* were animate and inanimate ones, whereas *which* and *who/whom* were associated with the inanimate and animate units respectively. The following examples 24 and 25 from the 15th century show that the invariable relative marker could follow antecedents of the different semantic nature.

(24) and the men [RC **that** were in the feldes and ryuer] cam for to helpe them.

(EEBO, Jacobus der Voragine 1483).

(25) and the lawe byndeth noo man to a thynge [RC **that** is Impossyble].

(EEBO, Christin de Pisan 1484).

The LME cases 24 and 25 demonstrate an ordinary structure of the complex sentence with the subordinate relative clause. Although specific nouns and verbs still preserve the letters which disappeared later, the invariant relativizer *that* already existed in its modern graphic form and therefore, it is also quite easy to select its occurrences during the analysis. As it has been stated

already, the last decades of the 15th century still do not perform an extensive use of the target *wh*-words in this role and therefore, the distinction between animate and inanimate antecedents probably was not obligatory for that time. The later sporadic occurrences of the *wh*-relativizers found in the EEBO corpus reflect the process of the gradual embedding and regularization in the system of the English language grammar. One should further emphasize an interesting fact that the declined form of *who, whom* was more frequently used in the relative clauses within the LME relativization paradigm. Table 1 demonstrates more frequent use of *whom* in comparison to *who* in the syntactic roles of direct object and prepositional complement. This supports the assumption about the high level of explicitness of *whom,* because it was frequently used in the least accessible positions from the beginning of the corpus.

(26) he fonde a man [RC **whome** he knewe] alwey redy for to serue hym.

(EEBO, Jacobus der Voragine 1483).

| Period | *who* as DO | *whom* as DO | *who* as PC | *whom* as PC |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **1470s** | 4,21 | 64,59 | 21,06 | 167,10 |
| **1480s** | 3,51 | 43,70 | 14,84 | 158,89 |
| **1490s** | 4,52 | 30,61 | 21,08 | 136,01 |
| **1500s** | 6,99 | 29,50 | 16,30 | 139,74 |
| **1510s** | 8,46 | 40,16 | 10,57 | 182,85 |
| **1520s** | 5,59 | 36,81 | 10,19 | 79,86 |
| **1530s** | 7,04 | 41,41 | 13,24 | 67,89 |
| **1540s** | 6,66 | 42,02 | 10,91 | 66,25 |
| **1550s** | 5,40 | 31,72 | 10,80 | 64,27 |
| **1560s** | 3,61 | 37,05 | 7,03 | 59,50 |
| **1570s** | 2,79 | 36,25 | 4,01 | 53,14 |
| **1580s** | 3,47 | 37,68 | 3,72 | 53,11 |
| **1590s** | 3,15 | 36,92 | 2,16 | 49,57 |
| **1600s** | 3,62 | 36,52 | 1,87 | 50,01 |
| **1610s** | 1,77 | 32,28 | 1,70 | 47,99 |
| **1620s** | 1,32 | 27,73 | 1,04 | 45,58 |
| **1630s** | 1,40 | 27,58 | 0,93 | 47,47 |
| **1640s** | 1,72 | 35,48 | 0,93 | 62,23 |
| **1650s** | 1,68 | 38,58 | 0,60 | 59,88 |
| **1660s** | 1,59 | 30,15 | 0,58 | 49,83 |
| **1670s** | 1,53 | 34,61 | 0,39 | 55,44 |
| **1680s** | 1,75 | 30,89 | 0,63 | 50,30 |
| **1690s** | 1,69 | 29,16 | 0,58 | 44,31 |

Table 1: Normalized frequencies of *who* and *whom* per million in the DO and PC roles

Table 1  provides only the normalized frequencies obtained through the "Chart" function in the EEBO corpus. It allows to visualize and prove the fact that *whom* was more frequently used in the given positions and ability of *whom* to follow prepositions played an important role.

Interestingly, both examples 24 and 26 are found in the texts of the same historical genre of the same author Jacobus de Voragine. Jacobus de Voragine was an Italian chronicler and complied the lives of the great saints. This fact supports the idea that the influence of the Romance languages could be probably one of the factors which intensified the introduction of the interrogatives into the LME relative clause. Both antecedents in the examples 24 and 26 are animate and this can further support the fact that the semantic distinction was not clearly set yet. It is important to state that the antecedent and the relative marker in the second example appeared in the objective (accusative) case and this shows that the writer already understood the advantage of this particular pronominal relative marker that could be inflected. The current research assumes that the inability of *that* to change its form resulted in the search for other forms for the relativizer in the prepositional phrase. At this point, one should highlight two important focuses of the analysis. On the one hand, the relativizers themselves are described from the formal perspective to understand how the formal properties of the *wh*-pronouns contributed to their active introduction into the English relative clause. On the other hand, the syntactic role of the relative marker is viewed and analysed to trace, whether the introduction of the pronominal relativizers was directly dependent on the nature of the relativizer itself. It will be concluded whether the *wh*-relatives were indeed first introduced where more explicitness was required. The flexibility of the *wh*-words allowed conveying specific grammatical meaning which was difficult to express by means of the available invariable relativizer. *That* was and has been always a multifunctional unit in the English language and therefore, further linguistic items were required to mark the relativeness more precisely and explicitly in the target sentences. Polysemy of the invariable relativizer on the one side and intensive elaboration of the English sentence on the other can be regarded as the decisive factors for the introduction of the *wh*-words as relative markers. *Who* was not often used to relativize the antecedents in the SU position, because *that* was reluctant to leave this role and was sufficient in terms of accessibility in the relative clause. Further analysis of the specific instances and general tendencies of the target unit distribution within the corpus, will allow producing more precise conclusions. The following graphs and tables visualize basic tendencies which characterized that period of the RC development: the invariable *that* functioned as the most frequent universal relative marker in the SU and DO roles; the relative marker *which* was

considerably supplanting the invariable relativizer in both SU and DO roles; *who* was gradually increasing in its use in the SU role and reached a rather high point at the end of the 17ᵗʰ century; the inflected form *whom* appeared to be used in the DO position throughout the whole corpus at the stable rate. Table 2 demonstrates the normalized frequencies of all analysed relative markers per million words, whereas Table 3 provides an account of the percentage of each particular relativizer. The normalized frequency is divided by the total frequency of all relative clauses of this particular type.

| Period | *that* | *which* | *who* | *whom* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **1470s** | 2.922,22 | 183,96 | 4,21 | 64,59 |
| **1480s** | 2.414,66 | 181,55 | 3,51 | 44,24 |
| **1490s** | 2.038,14 | 149,06 | 4,52 | 30,61 |
| **1500s** | 1.805,00 | 119,56 | 6,99 | 29,50 |
| **1510s** | 1.964,87 | 118,38 | 8,46 | 40,16 |
| **1520s** | 1.198,19 | 143,28 | 5,59 | 37,14 |
| **1530s** | 1.507,32 | 444,51 | 10,85 | 86,06 |
| **1540s** | 1.592,25 | 477,86 | 14,58 | 129,05 |
| **1550s** | 1.494,44 | 510,57 | 15,10 | 89,34 |
| **1560s** | 1.491,27 | 614,86 | 12,31 | 111,78 |
| **1570s** | 1.287,88 | 597,35 | 9,32 | 105,51 |
| **1580s** | 1.320,35 | 701,86 | 11,30 | 117,41 |
| **1590s** | 1.036,86 | 623,84 | 9,79 | 118,40 |
| **1600s** | 963,82 | 632,93 | 9,92 | 114,04 |
| **1610s** | 938,31 | 616,57 | 8,39 | 111,51 |
| **1620s** | 903,97 | 619,93 | 6,80 | 95,92 |
| **1630s** | 941,67 | 541,10 | 5,30 | 82,19 |
| **1640s** | 942,10 | 556,88 | 7,38 | 92,15 |
| **1650s** | 977,51 | 613,03 | 7,25 | 99,08 |
| **1660s** | 915,25 | 595,31 | 6,87 | 90,22 |
| **1670s** | 976,85 | 634,86 | 7,95 | 97,85 |
| **1680s** | 965,03 | 591,21 | 9,00 | 93,93 |
| **1690s** | 957,39 | 647,97 | 9,48 | 100,06 |

Table 2: Normalized frequencies of *that, which, who* and *whom* per million in the DO role

| Period | *% that* | *% which* | *% who* | *% whom* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **1470s** | 92,038921 | 5,7938965 | 0,1326847 | 2,0344980 |
| **1480s** | 91,327416 | 6,8666463 | 0,1326395 | 1,6732986 |
| **1490s** | 91,711834 | 6,7073171 | 0,2032520 | 1,3775971 |
| **1500s** | 92,042755 | 6,0965954 | 0,3562945 | 1,5043547 |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **1510s** | 92,166584 | 5,5528012 | 0,3966287 | 1,8839861 |
| **1520s** | 86,562203 | 10,351377 | 0,4036087 | 2,6828110 |
| **1530s** | 73,573491 | 21,696686 | 0,5293551 | 4,2004675 |
| **1540s** | 71,925730 | 21,586017 | 0,6585795 | 5,8296732 |
| **1550s** | 70,845098 | 24,203822 | 0,7157397 | 4,2353405 |
| **1560s** | 66,866446 | 27,569481 | 0,5519471 | 5,0121261 |
| **1570s** | 64,392083 | 29,866682 | 0,4660576 | 5,2751783 |
| **1580s** | 61,385361 | 32,630614 | 0,5252208 | 5,4588044 |
| **1590s** | 57,961134 | 34,873151 | 0,5472844 | 6,6184314 |
| **1600s** | 56,013182 | 36,783194 | 0,5763480 | 6,6272756 |
| **1610s** | 56,025664 | 36,815076 | 0,5010369 | 6,6582233 |
| **1620s** | 55,573452 | 38,111565 | 0,4178095 | 5,8971742 |
| **1630s** | 59,969070 | 34,459017 | 0,3375565 | 5,2343564 |
| **1640s** | 58,935967 | 34,837262 | 0,4619306 | 5,7648402 |
| **1650s** | 57,606409 | 36,127258 | 0,4272365 | 5,8390960 |
| **1660s** | 56,931382 | 37,029744 | 0,4271495 | 5,6117251 |
| **1670s** | 56,875937 | 36,963817 | 0,4628184 | 5,6974276 |
| **1680s** | 58,163425 | 35,633284 | 0,5422753 | 5,6610161 |
| **1690s** | 55,927579 | 37,784540 | 0,5529873 | 5,8348938 |

Table 3: Proportions of *that, which, who* and *whom* in the DO role
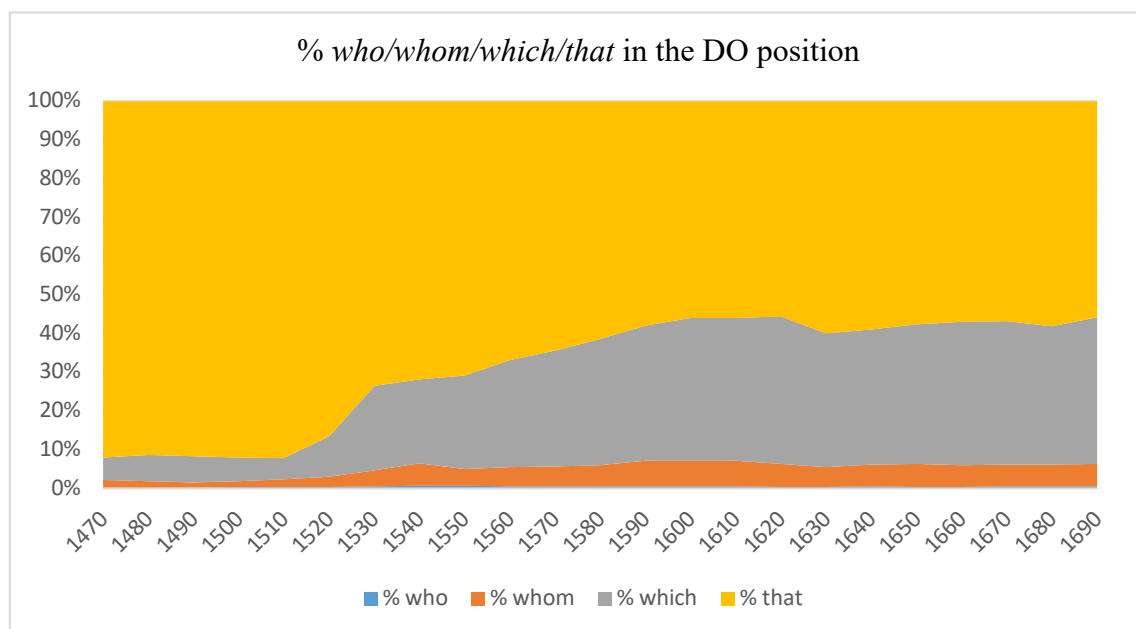


Graph 1: Proportions of *that, who, whom* and *which* in the DO role in each decade

Graph 1 is a reliable visualization of the main tendencies regarding the DO relative clauses in the EEBO corpus. There was a significant difference in frequency of *that* and *which* at the beginning of the corpus, *which* quickly integrated into the relative clause and was getting more

common throughout the corpus until it reached the highpoint of almost 40% share in the DO relative clauses. *That* remained the dominant relative marker in the syntactic role of the direct object till the 1510s and the decrease in its frequency after that can be explained by the introduction of the *wh*-relatives and possible rise of the zero relativization paradigm. Whereas the invariable relative marker *that* significantly fell through decades starting from the 1600s, the frequencies of the *wh*-relativizers, especially *which* and *whom,* grew steadily. This upward trend can justify one of the initial assumptions of this research: once introduced in the relative clause, the pronominal relativizers were intensively embedded in the language. The results also justify the statement about the use of *who* and *whom* as the relativizers in the DO role. Although the instances of *who* have been found, these occurrences were rather infrequent. The DO syntactic role was the only one in which all the analysed relativizers were used. The textual evidence from the EEBO corpus clearly supports the assumption that the pronominal relativizers started to be actively used from the end of the 15th century and they actively took the less accessible positions according to the Accessibility Hierarchy theory.

The syntactic role of the subject is the most accessible position on the AH pivot and it has been hypothesized in the current paper that the *wh*-pronouns entered the relative clause from the less accessible positions. The following Table 4, 5 and Graph 2 will show whether *that* indeed remained rather frequently used in the SU role and how *which* and *who* were integrated into the relative clause in the LME and EModE texts.

| Period | *that* | *which* | *who* |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1470s | 3114,60 | 585,57 | 75,83 |
| 1480s | 2696,84 | 1054,78 | 31,56 |
| 1490s | 2465,24 | 649,43 | 61,23 |
| 1500s | 2019,27 | 331,50 | 39,59 |
| 1510s | 1880,32 | 476,69 | 53,90 |
| 1520s | 1402,92 | 519,24 | 153,80 |
| 1530s | 1616,76 | 1472,54 | 68,59 |
| 1540s | 1679,40 | 1855,52 | 203,34 |
| 1550s | 1688,09 | 1630,46 | 234,78 |
| 1560s | 1652,67 | 1611,32 | 350,14 |
| 1570s | 1598,12 | 1630,80 | 372,11 |
| 1580s | 1564,50 | 1768,85 | 509,12 |
| 1590s | 1567,16 | 1763,92 | 614,43 |
| 1600s | 1324,82 | 1646,26 | 749,71 |
| 1610s | 1363,68 | 1702,08 | 749,51 |
| 1620s | 1302,61 | 1583,80 | 683,28 |
| 1630s | 1394,27 | 1604,56 | 631,98 |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **1640s** | 1363,53 | 1536,21 | 829,93 |
| **1650s** | 1417,40 | 1659,46 | 828,55 |
| **1660s** | 1466,76 | 1719,72 | 874,63 |
| **1670s** | 1520,80 | 1596,46 | 954,55 |
| **1680s** | 1500,81 | 1619,94 | 963,98 |
| **1690s** | 1595,55 | 1708,56 | 1166,34 |

Table 4: Normalized frequencies of *that, which* and *who* per million in the SU role

| Period | *% that* | *% which* | *% who* |
|---|---|---|---|
| **1470s** | 82,4841949 | 15,5076237 | 2,00818148 |
| **1480s** | 71,2849401 | 27,8807758 | 0,83428408 |
| **1490s** | 77,6232617 | 20,4487990 | 1,92793932 |
| **1500s** | 84,4754791 | 13,8681390 | 1,65638194 |
| **1510s** | 77,9921087 | 19,7720298 | 2,23586146 |
| **1520s** | 67,5795473 | 25,0118727 | 7,40858002 |
| **1530s** | 51,1975380 | 46,6303912 | 2,17207083 |
| **1540s** | 44,9245984 | 49,6360453 | 5,43935625 |
| **1550s** | 47,5071142 | 45,8854715 | 6,60741434 |
| **1560s** | 45,7278998 | 44,5839712 | 9,68812895 |
| **1570s** | 44,3794732 | 45,2870078 | 10,3335190 |
| **1580s** | 40,7160367 | 46,0341893 | 13,2497740 |
| **1590s** | 39,7201077 | 44,7070699 | 15,5728225 |
| **1600s** | 35,6057147 | 44,2449714 | 20,1493139 |
| **1610s** | 35,7426946 | 44,6123863 | 19,1410820 |
| **1620s** | 36,4909349 | 44,3679831 | 19,1410820 |
| **1630s** | 38,4010856 | 44,1929862 | 17,4059282 |
| **1640s** | 36,5590297 | 41,1887857 | 22,2521846 |
| **1650s** | 36,2933021 | 42,4912141 | 21,2154838 |
| **1660s** | 36,1171547 | 42,3460424 | 21,5368028 |
| **1670s** | 37,3495523 | 39,2075981 | 23,4428496 |
| **1680s** | 36,7420276 | 39,6583637 | 23,5996087 |
| **1690s** | 35,6910964 | 38,2189947 | 26,0899089 |

Table 5: Proportions of *that, which* and *who* in the SU role
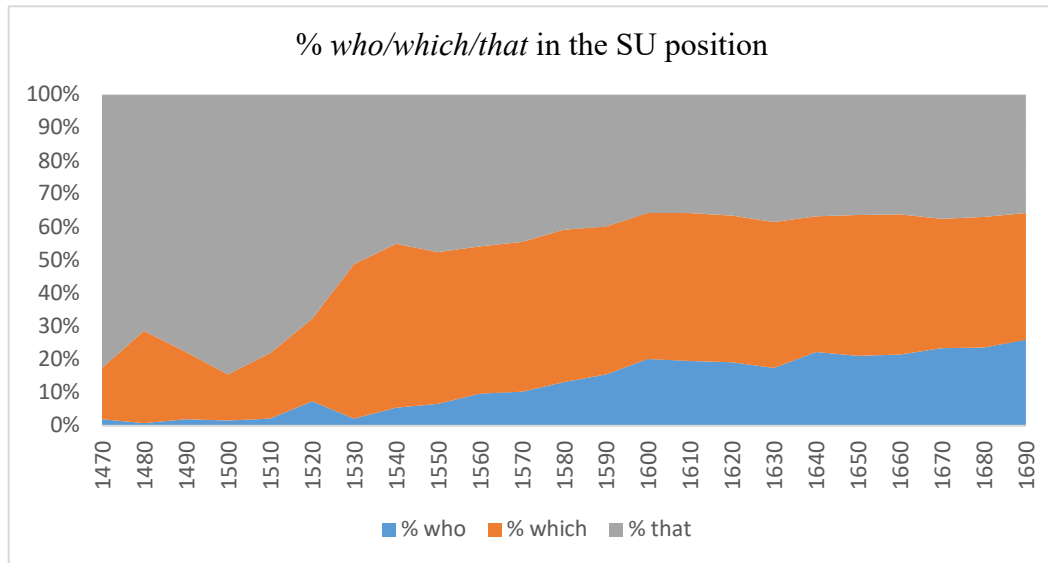
Graph 2: Proportions of *that, who* and *which* in the SU role in each decade

Graph 2 which is based on the obtained normalized frequencies and proportions of the relative makers in the SU role, provides rather interesting findings for the current research. Like in the case with the DO position, *that* was very frequently used as the SU relative marker till the 1520s and the first occurrences of the pronominal relativizers were also present. The frequency of *that* did not decrease as dramatically as in the DO relative clauses and this evidence can support the fact that the SU role required less explicit means of relativization and the invariable relativizer was quite sufficient. *Which* and *who* were climbing rather fast and the relative marker *which* reached almost 50% proportion rate in the 1540s. The process of intensive competition between the invariable *that* and pronominal *which* in the SU position started from the 1530s and the *wh*-relative was even more frequently used with each following decade. *Who* was increasing at a very fast rate starting from the 1550s. This evidence can again support the assumption of the current paper that once the *wh*-pronouns were introduced into the relative clause, there was an intensive increase in their use by the end of the corpus and it is possible to describe this process as a competition between two relativization strategies. Graph 2 shows that the most accessible position of subject was very actively taken by the pronominal relative markers as well. Therefore, one cannot conclude that the *wh*-relatives entered the relative clause only from the less accessible DO and PC syntactic roles. It is possible to state that the pronominal relative markers were comparatively very frequent in the PC role from the beginning of the EEBO corpus and they were gradually taking more accessible roles also. One can confirm that *that* was indeed more resistant to substitution in the SU position. It is important to mention that the total normalized frequencies of the DO and PC relative clauses are lower than those with the

SU relativizers. This might be explained by the fact that the gap relativization strategy was also activated and intensively developing in the LME and EModE periods. Whereas zero relative markers can be effectively used in the syntactic roles of direct object and prepositional complements, the SU relative clauses with zero relative markers are incomplete. Analysis of the relative clauses with the preposition complements will finally allow to answer the question whether the *wh*-relatives were climbing the AH pivot from the back end indeed.

As it has been stated above, before the *wh*-pronouns were introduced as relative markers in Late Middle English, *that* functioned as a universal relativizer and followed animate and inanimate antecedents. The gradual process of the natural language elaboration can be further proven by the fact that in certain roles, *which* was more frequent than *who* and also followed the animate antecedents very often. The above-provided graphs support this assumption. The *wh*-relatives in the PC role were rather frequent and the following examples illustrate such instances of the relative clauses in the EEBO texts:

(27) vntil the day [RC in **which** he was taken vp], after that he through the holy goste.

(EEBO, Church of England 1549).

(28) about the same time [RC in **which** he looked to be inuaded by iulius cesar and the romaynes]. (EEBO, Holinshed Raphael 1577).

The above-provided examples 27 and 28 demonstrate how *which* was introduced into the structure of the relative clause with the prepositional phase at the beginning of the corpus. The focus is now on the relative clauses in the role of the prepositional complements which consist of *wh*-words and prepositions. The evidence that certain positions were gradually taken by the pronominal relative markers can be explained by the fact that the invariable unit was gradually losing its power in certain constructions and new linguistic units were required to fill the gap. Moreover, other relative markers than *that* took the PC role in the OE and ME texts. The positions of the prepositional complement was a gap which had to be filled by the *wh*-relatives. Alternatively, one can state that the grammatical and semantic meaning of *that* became too ambiguous within the constructions with relative clauses and this required additional units to perform the same role in the sentence. Thus, it is clear why this particular role – the PC relativizer within the PP in the RC – was taken by the *wh*-words from the very beginning of the corpus. It allowed to strengthen the relationship between the RC and the relativized antecedent and to prevent from the ambiguity in such sentences. The following Tables 6 and 7 show the normalized frequencies per million and the proportions of *who* and *which* in the PC relative

clauses respectively. The frequency of *that* has been attested with the search code _nn* _i* [that], no occurrences have been found and therefore, only the *wh*-relatives are analysed. Graph 3 demonstrates that there were significantly less PC relative clauses when compared to the above-mentioned SU and DO ones. The number of such relative clauses was increasing from the beginning of the 17th century and the elaboration of the pronominal relativization paradigm played an important role in this process.

| Period | *which* | *whom* |
|---|---|---|
| 1470s | 424,08 | 167,10 |
| 1480s | 263,83 | 158,89 |
| 1490s | 232,87 | 136,01 |
| 1500s | 101,70 | 139,74 |
| 1510s | 190,25 | 182,85 |
| 1520s | 65,73 | 79,86 |
| 1530s | 118,03 | 67,89 |
| 1540s | 92,89 | 66,25 |
| 1550s | 75,08 | 64,27 |
| 1560s | 73,17 | 59,50 |
| 1570s | 73,83 | 53,14 |
| 1580s | 85,28 | 53,11 |
| 1590s | 97,41 | 49,57 |
| 1600s | 102,45 | 50,01 |
| 1610s | 118,92 | 47,99 |
| 1620s | 117,38 | 45,58 |
| 1630s | 151,82 | 47,47 |
| 1640s | 197,69 | 62,23 |
| 1650s | 224,26 | 59,88 |
| 1660s | 257,53 | 49,83 |
| 1670s | 279,42 | 55,44 |
| 1680s | 303,50 | 50,30 |
| 1690s | 318,48 | 44,31 |

Table 6: Normalized frequencies of *which* and *whom* per million in the PC role

| Period | *% which* | *% whom* |
|---|---|---|
| 1470s | 71,73396675 | 28,26603325 |
| 1480s | 62,41225271 | 37,58774729 |
| 1490s | 63,12925170 | 36,87074830 |
| 1500s | 42,12218650 | 57,87781350 |
| 1510s | 50,99150142 | 49,00849858 |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **1520s** | 45,14672686 | 54,85327314 |
| **1530s** | 63,48484848 | 36,51515152 |
| **1540s** | 58,36940837 | 41,63059163 |
| **1550s** | 53,87673956 | 46,12326044 |
| **1560s** | 55,15463918 | 44,84536082 |
| **1570s** | 58,14565662 | 41,85434338 |
| **1580s** | 61,62369968 | 38,37630032 |
| **1590s** | 66,27152131 | 33,72847869 |
| **1600s** | 67,19646076 | 32,80353924 |
| **1610s** | 71,24703254 | 28,75296746 |
| **1620s** | 72,03120025 | 27,96879975 |
| **1630s** | 76,18043351 | 23,81956649 |
| **1640s** | 76,05714286 | 23,94285714 |
| **1650s** | 78,92632175 | 21,07367825 |
| **1660s** | 83,78683064 | 16,21316936 |
| **1670s** | 83,44341700 | 16,55658300 |
| **1680s** | 85,78275736 | 14,21724264 |
| **1690s** | 87,78742091 | 12,21257909 |

Table 7: Proportions of *which* and *whom* in the PC role
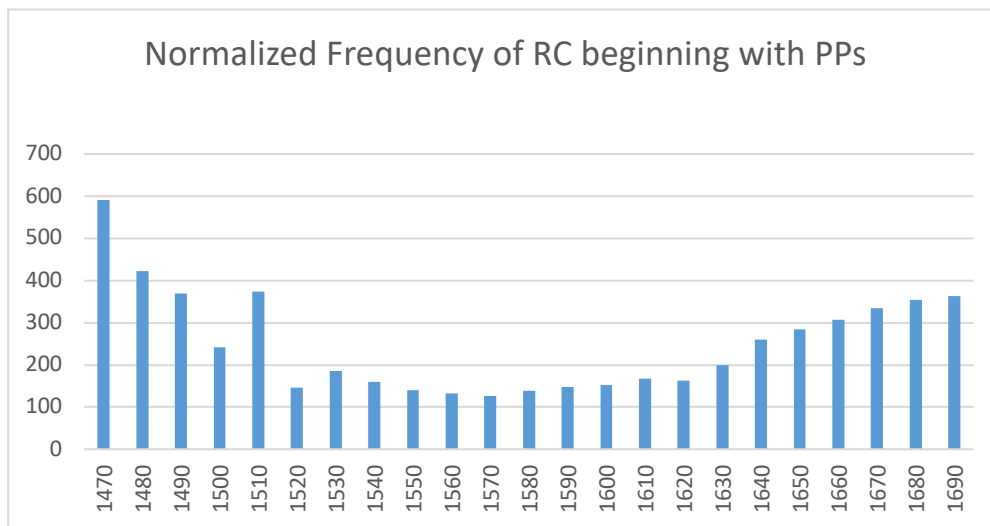


Graph 3: Normalized frequencies of relative clauses with *which* and *whom* in the PC role
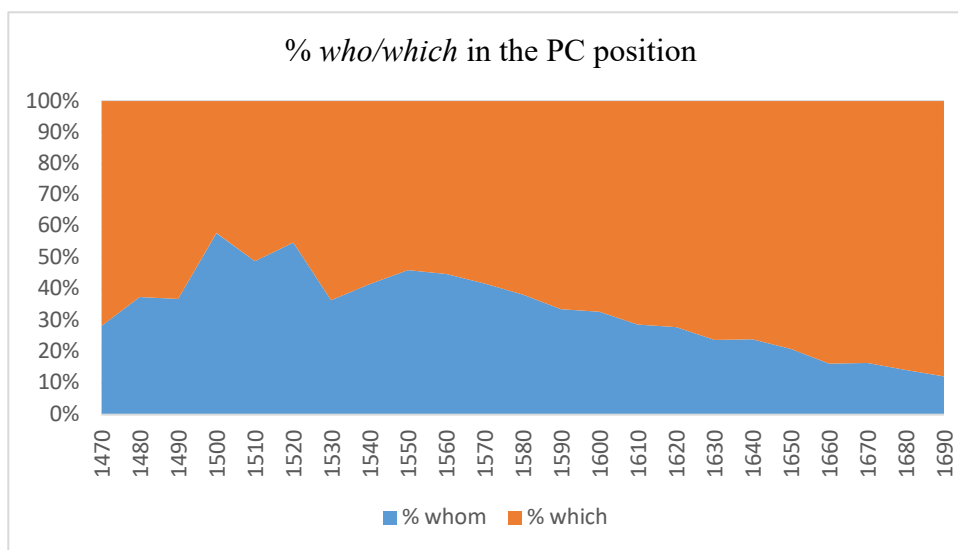
Graph 4: Proportions of *which* and *whom* in the PC syntactic role in each decade

Graph 4 can be viewed as a comparison between *who* and *which,* which are usually used with the animate and inanimate antecedents respectively. Although *which* was the most frequently used *wh*-relative in all the analysed constructions, *whom* reached up to the 60% proportion rate in the PC relative clauses and was even more frequent than its counterpart in this position. The absence of *that* in such relative clauses allows to state that there was a gap in this type of construction and the introduction of the pronominal relativizers as an additional means of relativization was required.

Introduction of the pronominal relativization paradigm can be interpreted as an important syntactic change which marked the transition from Middle English to Early Modern English. Rissannen (2000) states that the distinction between the personal relativizer *who* and the impersonal *which* was finally fixed during the EModE period and differentiation between coordinate and subordinate clauses became more clearcut (Risannen 2000: 189). The *wh*-relatives were actively used in all syntactic roles of the relative clause. Although there were less DO and PC relative clauses in the EEBO corpus, the *wh*-words were actively taking the less accessible syntactic roles in the relative clause, because the additional grammatical meaning required more explicit relativization strategies. The above-given tables and graphs describing the PC relative clauses have demonstrated that the invariable relative marker did not act as the prepositional complement within the prepositional phrase. The following example 29 can be interpreted as a rare exception from the rule.

(29) but to him [$_{RC}$ **that** directeth pacietly his way in this life[$_{RC}$ **to that** he is called], it chaunceth not so].                                        (EEBO, Gelli Giovanni Battista 1568).

Case 29 is the only one found in the EEBO corpus and it demonstrates that even such an exceptional use of the invariable relative marker is rather difficult to interpret. This supports the idea that *that* does not provide enough explicitness and its use in such positions can result in the confusion in interpretation. When discussing further factors which influenced the elaboration of the relative clause in Late Middle English and the Early Modern English, one should mention the assumptions produced by Fischer (1992) and Rissanen (2000) who suggested that the Latin relative pronoun paradigm affected the English relative clause to a great extent. The influence of the Romance languages has been already mentioned during the discussion of the previous examples. "The influence of Latin and Latinate prose can mainly be seen in the increase of the number of loosely appended relative clauses, often widely distanced from the antecedent, which strengthened the position of the *wh*-forms" (Rissanen 2000: 296). This comment provides a balanced perspective on the question of the foreign language's influence on the situation and can be viewed as a possible explanation of the phenomenon. The above-given evidence can also support one of the  initial assumptions that such *wh*-pronouns as *which* and *whom* in the DO and PC roles were used more frequently in the EEBO than the form *who.* There is a relation between the formal properties of the relative markers and the manner and frequency in their use in the LME and EModE language. The less accessible syntactic roles of the relative markers required more explicit forms and the interrogative relativizers were suitable enough to fill these gaps.

## 3.2.1 Different relativization strategies in EEBO: coexistence or competition

There are three basic strategies of relativization in English language and this statement is true for the analysed periods of Late Middle English and Early Modern English.  One has already seen that the invariable relativizer *that* was used the most frequently and this tendency has been also preserved in Present-Day English. The following examples demonstrate how the same antecedent *man* could be relativized by means of different relativizers. The EEBO corpus shows how different relativizing units were used to convey the same syntactic relations and all the examples have been taken from more or less the same time.

(30) man [$_{RC}$ **that** is borne of woman], hath but a shorte tyme to lyue.

(EEBO, Unknown author 1540).

(31) but behold, man [RC **who** is but a handfull of dust], will needes wage battle against his
maker.                                                  (EEBO, Calvin Jean 1574).

(32) the yong man [RC **which** had the sore eye], was present in the churche.

(EEBO, Bede the Venerable 1565).


In the above-selected examples of the target relative links 30, 31 and 32 one can see that the
animate antecedent can be followed by the relativizers representing different relativization
paradigms. The first invariable one is found in the first half of the 16th century, and the *wh-*
relatives were already frequently found in the corpus texts of this period. The examples of the
second half of the 16th century demonstrate the further integration of the pronominal elements
into the RC structure. Example 31 reflects the regular modern use of the English language,
when *who* is used to mark the animateness. In the last example, *which* is used in the role of
subject and refers to the animate antecedent *man.* Analysing these extracts, one can state that
both strategies co-existed in the LME period successfully, but there might have also been a
certain level of competition between those units. The use of different relative markers under
the same grammatical circumstances signals about the dynamic elaboration of the RC structure.
The period covered in the EEBO corpus was indeed very dynamic and the most salient syntactic
features of the English language were elaborated at that time.

According to the theoretical material discussed, the pronominal and invariable
relativization strategies co-existed within the syntactic structure due to certain extra-, intra-
linguistic processes and the new units were introduced gradually. Emonds & Havranova (2014)
state that the invariant *that* was the first to replace the OE *þe* and this happened at the beginning
of the 13th century (Emonds & Havranova 2014: 151). This fact supports the idea that the
invariable relativizer was intensively used in the syntactic role of SU, DO and served as a
universal unit to follow animate and inanimate antecedents during the specific time as in
examples 33, 34 and 35:


(33) Remember the that ihesus sirak saith / that a man [RC **that** is ioyous &; glad in herte]/ hit
hym comserueth florisshing in age.                                (EEBO, Chaucer 1477).

(34) They wexen drye: for nature yeueth to euery thing [RC **that** is conuenyent to him].

(EEBO, Boethius 1478).

(35) Euery man [RC **that** he met in the wey] / [RC **that** wolde be shryuen to hym] he wolde lyght
doune of his hors / and here his shryfte.                        (EEBO, Higden Ranulf 1482).

Cases 33, 34 and 35 demonstrate that the animate and inanimate antecedents could be followed by *that*. The examples demonstrate how the invariable relative marker acted in the SU and the DO syntactic roles. As a universal relative link which partially substituted the OE *þe*, the ME *that* followed the animate and inanimate antecedents, acted in the role of SU and DO within the relative clause and was also used in restrictive and non-restrictive relative clauses within the syntactic structure of the LME and EModE sentence. As it has been shown in Graphs 1 and 2, the invariable relativization strategy remained very strong and the relative link *that* was competing with other relativizers, as soon as they were introduced in the English language.

The invariable and pronominal relativization strategies co-existed during the discussed period and it was becoming clearer which relative markers had to be used in specific context. *That* was the most frequently used relative marker beginning from the earlier stages of the language development. The current paper investigates which positions of the relative markers required the formal substitution and the answers provided in this research can fill the gap in the studies on the LME and the EModE relativizers. Whereas there are numerous studies conducted on the OE texts and different relativizers on the earlier stages of the English language, the analysed time remains relatively less investigated field. This statement refers to Late Middle English and the Early Modern English in particular. As it has been mentioned, Suarez-Gomez (2008) is the one who has studied the competition between the demonstratives and interrogatives in the relative clause in detail. It is important to conclude in this part, that there was a certain kind of competition and complementarity between the relativizers from different paradigms at the same time.

## 3.2.2 Distribution of the invariable *that* within the structure of the RCs

The EEBO corpus provides a reliable account of the gradual transformational processes of the ME norms because the phenomenon of printing required the authors of the books to follow the basic grammatical rules and tendencies. Another interesting observation can be made in this context. As it has been mentioned, to observe the general tendencies in the use of *that* as a relativizer in the SU and DO roles within the selected texts, one has used the search syntax _nn* [that] _v** and _nn* [that] _p* respectively. One has taken the normalized frequencies provided for each decade from the EEBO corpus, divided them by the normalized number of the respective relative clauses and calculated the proportion of *that* for the adequate comparison with the *wh*-relatives distribution.
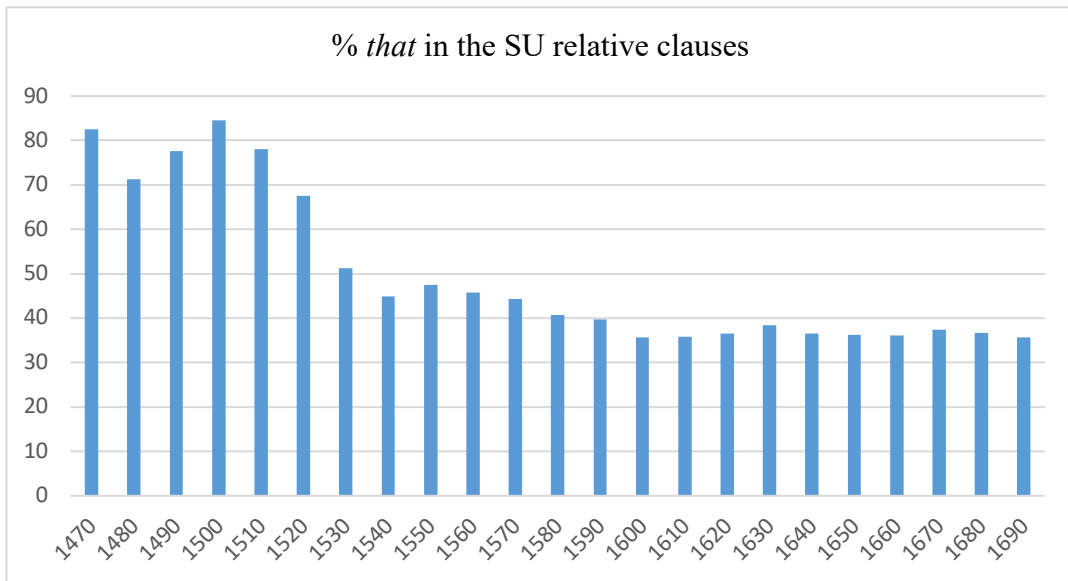
Graph 5: Proportions of *that* in the SU role in different decades

| Decades | 1470s | 1480s | 1490s | 1500s | 1510s | 1520s | 1530s | 1540s | 1550s | 1560s | 1570s | 1580s |
|---------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| **Tokens** | 3114,6 | 2696,8 | 2465,2 | 2019,3 | 1880,3 | 1402,9 | 1616,8 | 1679,4 | 1688,1 | 1652,7 | 1598,1 | 1564,5 |
| **%** | 82,484 | 71,284 | 77,623 | 84,475 | 77,992 | 67,580 | 51,197 | 44,925 | 47,507 | 45,728 | 44,379 | 40,716 |
| **Decades** | 1590s | 1600s | 1610s | 1620s | 1630s | 1640s | 1650s | 1660s | 1670s | 1680s | 1690s | |
| **Tokens** | 1567,2 | 1324,9 | 1363,7 | 1302,6 | 1394,3 | 1363,5 | 1417,4 | 1466,8 | 1520,8 | 1500,8 | 1595,6 | |
| **%** | 39,720 | 35,606 | 35,743 | 36,491 | 38,401 | 36,559 | 36,293 | 36,117 | 37,350 | 36,742 | 35,691 | |

Table 8: Normalized frequencies per million and proportions of *that* in the SU relative clauses
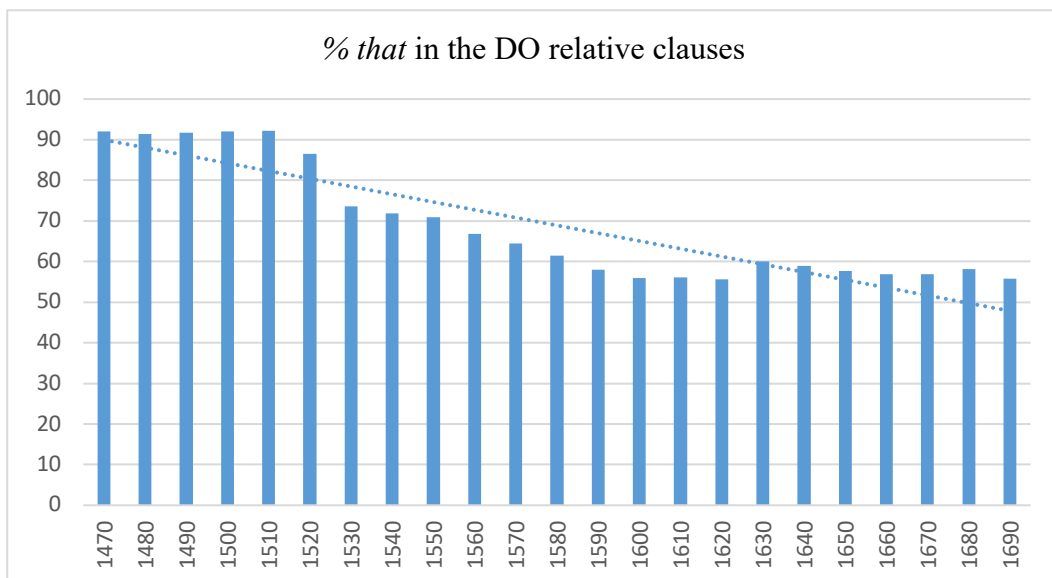


Graph 6: Proportions of *that* in the DO role in different decades

| Decades | 1470s | 1480s | 1490s | 1500s | 1510s | 1520s | 1530s | 1540s | 1550s | 1560s | 1570s | 1580s |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Tokens | 2922,2 | 2414,6 | 2018,1 | 1805,0 | 1964,9 | 1198,2 | 1507,3 | 1592,3 | 1494,4 | 1491,3 | 1287,9 | 1320,4 |
| % | 92,039 | 91,323 | 91,712 | 92,043 | 92,167 | 86,562 | 73,573 | 71,926 | 70,845 | 66,867 | 64,392 | 61,385 |
| Decades | 1590s | 1600s | 1610s | 1620s | 1630s | 1640s | 1650s | 1660s | 1670s | 1680s | 1690s | |
| Tokens | 1036,9 | 963,82 | 938,31 | 903,97 | 941,67 | 942,10 | 977,51 | 915,25 | 976,85 | 965,03 | 957,39 | |
| % | 57,961 | 56,013 | 56,026 | 55,573 | 59,969 | 58,935 | 57,606 | 56,931 | 56,876 | 58,163 | 55,828 | |

Table 9: Normalized frequencies per million and proportions of *that* in the DO relative clauses

First of all, from the above-given tables, one can see that the maximal reach for both positions is around 3,000 occurrences per million and this allows to consider the results to be very conceivable. *That* definitely remained the dominant relative marker in these RC types and with the proportion up to 90% in the texts in the 15th century. One can also see that the invariable *that* decreased in its frequency in the SU and DO relative clauses with the time. Graph 5 demonstrates the fact that *that* significantly decreased in the 1530s and after that its share remained on the around 40% rate till the end 1690s. The growing numbers of the pronominal relativizers and development of the zero strategy can explain such a fall of the invariable relative marker . *That* remained strongly used in the role of SU and DO, also on the later stages of the relativization system development according to the results of this observation.

It is possible to summarize the distribution of *that* as described in Suarez (2012) on the status of the invariable relativizer during the period of Middle English. According to this research, *that*, as a relative marker, became a norm in the sentences with any type of antecedent, in most dialectal areas, in restrictive and non-restrictive clauses, in all possible communication contexts already in the 13th century. Only around the 14th and the 15th century, the mentioned specialization and further distinctions appeared with the introduction of the *wh*-relatives (Suarez 2012: 86). This fact supports the statements and basic assumptions of the current research, because it also provides the base for further observation of the new pronominal relativizers. The use of the invariable relative marker was a result of the gradual increase in the use of the pronominal ones. As illustrated in Graphs 5 and 6, one can observe the significant decrease in the frequency of *that* in the SU and DO positions. One can assume that the numbers of the pronominal relative markers were increasing simultaneously. Further analysis of the *wh*-relatives distribution will show whether there was a direct dependence between the two processes. The following examples allow to view how *that* behaved in the SU position and where it was placed in the LME sentence:

(36) euery man [RC **that** was in rome] wept for hym / as that they had loste theyr fader.

(EEBO, Ranuld Higden 1502).

(37) tolde they of our lorde ihesu cryst yt he torned the man [RC **that** was wedded ye same daye

fro his wyf] and made hym bysshop of the same. (EEBO, John Mirk 1508).

(38) we rede of an holy man [RC **that** was called Ioseph] [**that** suffred grete persecucyon but he

suffred mekely]. (EEBO, John Mirk 1508).

The above-provided examples 36, 37 and 38 demonstrate the use of the invariable relativizer in the SU role at the very beginning of the 16th century. It followed the animate antecedents and it could follow the relativized noun phrase within several homogeneous subordinate clauses. The invariable *that* was strong enough to relativize all the presented types of the noun phrases. As it has also been mentioned, it could also take the SU and DO role in the relative clause. This evidence also contributes to the definition of *that* as the universal relative marker within the discussed period. Based on the review of the obtained results, one can state that the proportions of *that* in the DO relative clauses remained higher and more stable than those in the SU relative clauses. However, one should emphasize that the number of the SU relative clauses did not fall that dramatically, probably due to the fact that the gap relative marker could not substitute the invariable or relative ones in the SU position. The number of the DO relative clauses significantly decreased, but *that* was still rather frequent in this RC type.

## 3.3 Introduction of the *wh*-relatives: gradual loss of the interrogative qualities

The interrogative nature of the *wh*-forms in the position of the relative marker has been already discussed in the theoretical part of this work. The OE pronominal relativization paradigm was presented by *se, seþe* and the interrogative words existed in the *hwa*-form during that period. The interrogative forms in Middle English including *who, whom, which* stem from the OE *hwa* and they presented the subject to the gradual metamorphose, namely acquisition of the new meaning – the meaning of relativization (Suarez-Gomez 2008: 340). The following examples demonstrate the transitional types of the constructions with *who* which can be found in the earlier period of Late Middle English:

(39) bridoll answered **who** coude well speke that lagage. (EEBO, Jean Froissart 1523).

(40) but perauenture thou wolte aske **who** this is / it is thyn olde man that tredeth downe.

(EEBO, Bernard of Clairvaux 1499).

(41) **who** so lowyth hymself: he shal be hyed / this part of mekenes the behoueth.

(EEBO, Walter Hilton 1507).

(42) but **who** is (i praye you) so shamelesse to receyue so wicked a dignitie?

(EEBO, Bernardino Ochino 1549).


Concerning the target interrogative form *who,* examples 39, 40, 41 and 42 demonstrate that the unit was also multifunctional during the period of Late Middle English. It is important to look at each particular role it performed in the complex sentence to understand which relations it marked in the constructions. Case 39 demonstrates how the interrogative *who* is used in the object clause which serves the function of object of the verb *answered.* Case 40 presents the indirect question and demonstrates that *who* preserved its full interrogative semantics and functioned in the position where the relation of the strong correlation was present. Extract 41 exemplifies how *who* acted as a relative marker on the earlier stages and there was already a strong correlation of this unit with the relativized pronoun. The subordinate clause is in the anaphoric position, but it still possesses the basic properties of the relative clause and the relativization linkage is preserved. Finally, example 42 which is taken from the 1540s, illustrates the regular question with *who* used as the interrogative word. All these examples visualize how *who* acted in the system of the LME complex sentence. *Who* is found in the SU role in the example 41 and as far as the relative clause is concerned, it provided the maximal correlation with the relativized antecedents. This might explain why this particular unit came to actively perform the function of the relative marker and has been preserved in this position until today.

Concerning the interrogative *which,* it is possible to state that it frequently acted as the relative marker in the different syntactic roles even before the 1470s. This particular form was rather flexible and allowed for the different word orders in the structure of the LME relative clause. The following examples demonstrate such properties:


(43) the place [$_{RC}$ **in which** the Emperour did sit], was no lower then the place, where the pope did holde his feete. (EEBO, John Rainolds 1584).

(44) the first thing [$_{RC}$ **which** he felt], was that his good mistres lay pressing his brest wt the whole weight of hir body. (EEBO, George Gascoigne 1573).

(45) but the garmentes [$_{RC}$ **which** she is put out **of** /] must be kept in the vestiarye

(EEBO, Benedict Saint 1517).

(46) i testifye agayn to euery man [RC **which** is circucised that he is become dettour to kepe the hole lawe].                                         (EEBO, Erasmus Sarcerius 1538).

As it has been mentioned already, *which* was used in the all mentioned positions of the relative marker from the earlier decades of Late Middle English. The main reason for such circumstances can be presented by the formal characteristics which allowed *which* to be rather flexible and positioned in any place within the relative clause. Examples 43, 44, 45 and 46 illustrate how *which* acted in the positions of the PC, DO, PC and SU respectively. One can admit that *which* frequently entered the RC in the PC position and the preposition could either precede it or be stranded within the relative clause. This flexibility allowed *which* to actively supplant *that* in all possible syntactic positions. All four examples demonstrate the use of the pronominal relative marker in different syntactic roles. It is possible to state that the pronominal relative markers *which, who* and *whom* entered the LME complex sentence having actively taken the least prominent positions in the relative clause. This research focuses on the syntactic role of the relativizer within the relative clause. The *wh*-relatives as the more explicit means of relativization allowed for more flexibility and variability within the subordinate relative clause. The preposition stranding is another interesting phenomenon which can be seen in example 45 and this shows how the PC relative role of *which* was realized on the earlier stages of the syntactic development of English. As soon as *which* began to act as a relative marker, it appeared in non-restrictive clauses. The fact that it relativized animate and inanimate antecedents, shows that the animacy parameter distinction was activated on the later stages of the LME development. The information parameter seems to have been fully activated already at the end of the 15th century. This research will attempt to look at this factor in the following sections.

### 3.3.1 General overview of the syntactic behaviour of the *wh*-relatives

The current analysis of the EEBO corpus provides an account of the primary tendencies and changes within the syntactic system of Late Middle English and Early Modern English. At first, the focus is narrowed down to specific instances of the relativizers in the selected texts. Specific syntax for the corpus search allows to view the behaviour of different relative markers within the same syntactic conditions. The following examples of the *wh*-relatives are provided to demonstrate how they behaved due to their specific formal and semantic properties:

(47) the man [RC **who** is a lmpe or masse of foolishnesse], is the onely occasion of this motion.

<div align="right">(EEBO, Marcus Cicero 1576)</div>

(48) Many love the merry meeting, but not the men [RC **whom** they meet].

<div align="right">(EEBO, Pierce 1658)</div>

(49) and vpon the sonne of man [RC **whom** thou hast fortified for for thy glory]: thyne owne selfe.
<div align="right">(EEBO, Matthew Parker 1568)</div>

(50) There be sometimes just men [RC **to whom** it happeneth according to the work of the wicked].
<div align="right">(EEBO, Gataker 1649)</div>

All four examples serve as reliable evidence for the fact that the pronominal relativizers marked the boundary between the main clause and the relative one, introduced the latter and must be viewed as case-coding units. The *wh*-word can be declined and frequently presented in its variant form *whom* when used in the syntactic position of DO or PC. Examples 47, 48 and 49 visualize how *who/whom* relativized the antecedents in the SU, DO and PC positions respectively. Example 50 demonstrates the rendered occurrence of the syntax _nn* _i* [whom], in which *whom* was already used as the declined form of *who* within the prepositional phrase in the relative clause. Such instances can show the advantages of the pronominal relativizers when compared to the invariable *that* which is not flexible and cannot convey the same meaning in the sentence.

(51) But by the ayde of god [RC **in who** they put their whole affyauce] dyd wonderful dedes.
<div align="right">(EEBO, Erasmus 1549).</div>

As for the case 51 and further rendered results after the implementation of the above-indicated syntax, one should admit that the frequency of the relative *who* in this role is significantly lower than *whom* in the same place. The NP *god* and the relativizer *who* are introduced in the position of the prepositional complement. This syntactic role could be taken only by a *wh*-relativizer, because *that* was not explicit enough.

To generalize the syntactic behaviour of the *wh*-relatives, one can state that whereas *that* was decreasing in its use as the relative marker in the selected constructions within the EEBO corpus, the pronominal relativizers were increasing in their use in certain syntactic roles. Thus, the inverse proportionality relations have been proven to take place on the more general level of the syntactic system. Further analysis and discussion will demonstrate that *which* was very frequently used in the SU role and the growing intensity in the DO role was rather remarkable

for it. *Who* successfully realized its relative properties in the SU position and the tendency was expanding. As for the declined form *whom,* it was mostly used in the PC role and the numbers were growing until the last decades of the EEBO corpus. Overview of these processes has been provided in the above-provided Graphs 1,2 and 4 and a more detailed analysis will be provided in the following sections.

### 3.3.2 The pronominal relativizers: animacy parameter at work

When analysing the corpus material, it is important to take into account that the target items *who, which, whom* and *that* do not always perform the function of relativizers in the given texts. One has already introduced an effective syntax for the selection of relevant and representative occurrences out of the texts. It is important to mention that the variant forms used in the position of relativizers, represented the consequences of the high level of grammatical polysemy in Late Middle English. Lack of units for designation of more specific categories resulted in the introduction of the interrogative pronouns within the structure of the LME relative clause. A qualitative analysis is required to discuss the animacy and information parameters which have been mentioned in the theoretical part already. The high frequencies of the *wh*-words relativizing the animate antecedents prove the semantic reasons for the intensive introduction of the pronominal paradigm. This was a gradual process and therefore, a number of the transitional processes, overlapping of the units in the position of relativizer and differences in the frequency characterized the grammatical system of Early Modern English also. It has been already mentioned that Risannen (2000) states that the distinction between the personal *who* and the impersonal *which* was finally fixed in the EModE period. This particular era in the language development can be also characterized by the high number of variant grammatical units which were inherited from the preceding periods of Middle English and therefore, the syntactic system was further enriched through the new tendencies. The following corpus analysis investigates which kind of antecedents were followed by the *wh*-words from the beginning and examine the semantic structure of the respective antecedents. The above-mentioned syntax has been applied and the following table demonstrates first ten most frequent antecedents followed by the relative markers in the specific syntactic role:

| REL as DO | *that* | *which* | *who* | *whom* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | thing | thing | man | man |
| | time | words | people | person |
| | man | place | person | god |
| | end | power | selfe | people |

|  |  |  |  |  |
|---|---|---|---|---|
|  | reason | doctrine | god | son |
|  | condition | book | judge | others |
|  | cause | life | other | brother |
|  | people | work | millions | sonne |
|  | word | way | ministers | servant |
|  | day | money | author | woman |
|  |  |  |  |  |
| **REL as SU** | *that* | *which* | *who* |  |
|  | thing | thing | man |  |
|  | man | father | person |  |
|  | others | faith | others |  |
|  | people | part | god |  |
|  | person/persons | man | lord |  |
|  | soul | church | spirit |  |
|  | body | body | christians |  |
|  | word | life | bishops |  |
|  | life | spirit | prince |  |
|  | grace | word | king |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |
| **REL as PC** |  | *which* |  | *whom* |
|  |  | end |  | person |
|  |  | part |  | man/men |
|  |  | reason |  | people |
|  |  | time |  | son |
|  |  | way |  | others |
|  |  | means |  | ministers |
|  |  | day |  | god |
|  |  | vertue |  | prince |
|  |  | want |  | lord |
|  |  | place |  | church |

Table 10: Ten most frequent antecedents followed by the different relativizers in various syntactic positions (animacy parameter)

Table 10 has been created manually and first ten most frequent antecedents have been taken to provide an overview of the tendency. As it has already been discussed, the animacy parameter decides the choice of *who* and *whom* against *that* and *which*, because the latter usually relates to inanimate antecedents in Present-Day English. One can state that this parameter was activated and was intensively getting its meaning during the LME and the EModE periods when the pronominal relative markers *which, who, whom* entered the syntactic system of the English

language. Table 10 demonstrates the fact that *that* was a prototypical relative marker and was used with the animate and inanimate antecedents. *Which* followed inanimate antecedents when performing the SU, DO and PC roles and there were exceptions when it relativized personal noun phrases like in the case with *father* in the SU relative clauses. The following examples from the EEBO corpus demonstrate the use of specific relative markers in different syntactic roles and following antecedents of different semantic nature.

(52) for ther is no thing [RC **that** i desire somoche] / whan it shalbe to you possible as for to retorne me into the prosperite of iongthe.

(EEBO, Lefeievre Raoul 1477).

(53) how he hadde answere that the firste man [RC **that** he mette with an hose on that one foot].

(EEBO, Lefeievre Raoul 1477).

(54) but all thing [RC **that** is good] / is there / and all thing that is nought can neuer come ther.

(EEBO, Denis, the Carthusian 1479).

(55) Remembre the that ihesus sirak saith / that a man [RC **that** is ioyous &; glad in herte] / hit hym comserueth florisshing in age.          (EEBO, Chaucer Geoffrey 1477).

Cases 52, 53, 54 and 55 exemplify how the invariable relative marker *that* followed antecedents of animate and inanimate nature when acting in the syntactic roles of direct object and subject. These occurrences are found in the 1470s, at the very beginning of the corpus and this evidence supports the fact that *that* was a universal relativizer in this respect and that a clear distinction between personal and impersonal relative markers was not set yet. The following examples will show which antecedents were followed by the pronominal relative marker *which*.

(56) but that thing [RC **which** i haue spoken], shalbe done, saith the lord god.

(EEBO, Whittingham William 1561).

(57) but the things [RC **which** are not sene], (are) eternal.

(EEBO, Whittingham William 1561).

(58) men, that they may glorify your father [RC **which** is in heaue].

(EEBO, Pits John 1566).

(59) the eight circumstance is the end [RC **for which** the supper was instituted].

(EEBO, Hemmingsen 1569).

According to the analysis of first ten most frequent relativized antecedents, the most frequently used pronominal relativizer *which* followed impersonal noun phrases in most cases and example 58 demonstrates an exception when this *wh*-pronoun also followed the animate antecedent. One should emphasize that these instances are found in the 1560s when the pronominal relative markers were actively introduced and embedded in the LME syntactic structure.

(60) for where as a iudge medleth wyth mater present / &; persons [RC **who** he seeth &; knoweth]. (EEBO, More Thomas 1529).

(61) bernarde / called the golden epistle / [RC **whiche** he set to a yog religyous man] [RC **whom** he moche loued]. (EEBO, Bernard of Clairvaux 1535).

(62) that a man [RC **who** is called to the faith and baptized in Christe], [RC **who** doth his best to serue god with all his hart and thought]. (EEBO, Sander Nicholas 1566).

(63) and he sawe agrete fatte man [RC **to whom** he sayd thou paynes the sore to breke the wallis of thy pryson]. (EEBO, Rivers Anthony 1477).

Cases 60, 61, 62 and 63 demonstrate how the *wh*-relatives which are considered to follow animate antecedents, were actually used in the EEBO corpus. *Who* and its declined form *whom* took the DO syntactic role, followed personal noun phrases and served as counterparts for the inanimate relative marker *which. Who* was the only relative marker in the SU role that followed animate antecedents, whereas *whom* performed this function when acting as a prepositional complement. Interestingly, the declined form *whom* can be found from the very beginning of the corpus and example 63 demonstrates such an instance from the 1470s.

Further discussion will demonstrate that *which* was a universal pronominal relative unit to some extent and *who* substituted it in the positions after personal antecedents on the later stages of the LME and the EModE development. One can state that as soon as *which* was combined with a preposition and used within the prepositional phrase in the relative clause, it tended to follow inanimate antecedents, whereas *who* was dominating in this position after animate ones in the PC position. The occurrences when *who* or *whom* followed the antecedent of the inanimate nature were very rare and can be viewed as exceptions from the general rules.
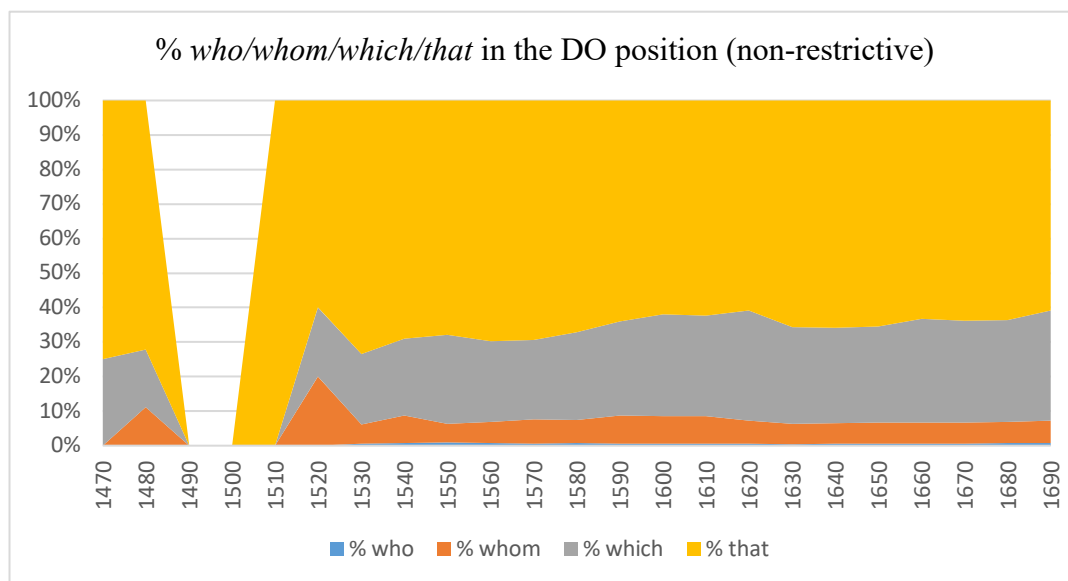
### 3.3.3 Distinction between restrictive and non-restrictive relative clauses: activation of the information parameter

Distinction between restrictive and non-restrictive relative clauses was gradually shaped throughout the LME and EmodE periods. The invariant *that* remained the most common relative link, but there was a strong tendency to use the *wh*-relatives in non-restrictive clauses. As it has been mentioned above, the *wh*-words were at first introduced in the context with a rather loose relative link. Modern punctuation rules did not apply in the observation period as they do now and therefore, it is rather difficult to conclude when the so-called information parameter was activated. The current research attempts to find at least some evidence for the fact that the introduction of the *wh*-relatives allowed to distinguish between restrictive and non-restrictive clauses. As it has been mentioned in the theoretical part, a non-restrictive clause does not delimit potential referents of the antecedents, but provides some additional information about the relativized unit.
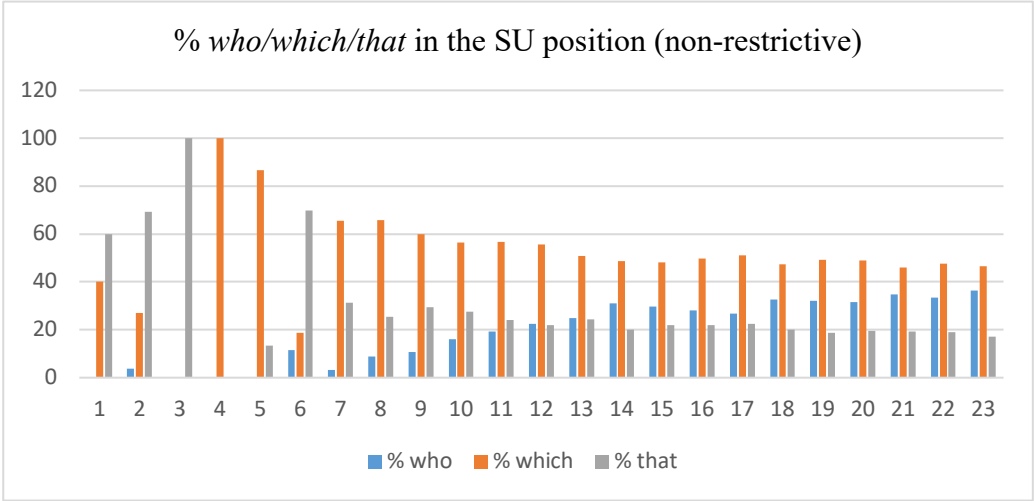


Graph 7: The SU relative markers separated by comma from the relativized antecedents

Graph 7 demonstrates comparison of the proportions of *who, which* and *that* in the SU relative clauses if the search syntax _n* , [who] _v*, n* , [which] _v* and n* , [that] _v* is applied. Such search syntax returns the relative SU clauses which are separated by comma from the main ones and this evidence can be used to suggest generalizations in this regard. The consecutively numbered decades demonstrate that there were definite changes in the relative clause as far as the information parameter is concerned. The portion of *that* following separated noun phrases reached the 100% rate in the 1490s, the portion of *which* in the same position comprised 100% in the 1500s and one can see a mixed use of different relative markers in the following decades. The relative marker *which* was dominating in these cases, the frequency of *who* was intensively growing. This allows to state that the information parameter was integrated and the distinction between restrictive and non-restrictive clauses was finally set.

**% *who/whom/which/that* in the DO position (non-restrictive)**

Graph 8: The DO relative markers separated by comma from the relativized antecedents

Similar tendencies are reflected in Graph 8 which visualizes how *that, who, whom* and *which* were used in the DO relative clauses if separated by comma from the relativized noun phrases. As one can see, the instances of *who* were very rare and occasional occurrences can be found closer to the 17th century, whereas *whom* and *which* were frequently used. This evidence allows to state that the introduction of the *wh*-relativizers allowed to distinguish between restrictive and non-restrictive RC types. These findings can serve as additional information for the current research and help to complete the general picture regarding the process of the development of the pronominal relative markers.

## 3.4 Distribution of the *wh*-relatives

As one can see from the discussion above, the quantitative analysis of the EEBO corpus data allows providing accurate visualization which relativizers dominated during specific periods. Graphs 1, 2 and 4 have demonstrated different tendencies in the use of the pronominal relativizers in different syntactic roles within the LME and the EModE relative clause. Whereas it has been already shown and proven that *that* dominated as the relative marker throughout the entire analysed period, the *wh*-relatives were used in specific syntactic roles during different decades from the 15th till the end of the 17th century. It is necessary to compare the frequencies of the relative markers in different roles to make more precise conclusions about the basic trends and confirm the initially declared statements.

As it has been demonstrated by Graphs 1, 2 and 4 the relative marker *which* was very common in all syntactic positions and its occurrences were growing throughout the entire 16th

century. The tokens of *who* were comparatively rare, its declined form *whom* was stably used in the DO and PC roles, although the numbers were rather low. *Which* was the first interrogative pronoun that was actively used in the role of relativizer. Due to its morphosyntactic flexibility, it relativized antecedents of the animate and inanimate nature in various syntactic roles, one can admit that it was introduced mainly due to the high polysemy of *that,* to prevent from the misleading interpretations. During the analysed period, *who* was rarely used relativizing antecedents in different syntactic roles. Of course, it is important to mention that *who* mainly relativized animate antecedents. *Whom* was more frequent when compared to the form *who* and it was extremely strongly set in constructions with the prepositional phrases already in the first decades of the EEBO corpus. This can be explained by its flexibility and high relativizing potential. The relative marker *whom* was quite frequent when acting as a PC within the PP. It relativized animate antecedents,nthe following examples can show that its flexibility was very important and therefore, the occurrences within the EEBO corpus were growing intensively:

(64) but the persons [RC by **whom** it is celebrated] and [RC **who** worship god].

(EEBO, Tombes 1657).

Example 64 shows how the pronominal relative markers *whom* and *who* relativized the animate antecedent in the subject role and performed the role of the prepositional complement and subject in the relative clause respectively. The relative marker *which* was the dominant relativizing unit used within the RC structure. Taking into account all these tendencies, one can generalize that *which* was very frequently used in all syntactic positions within the relative clause. This fact supports the previously mentioned implication that *which* was a universal relative marker of the pronominal paradigm. There were also quite positive tendencies in the use of *whom* in relative clauses, whereas *who* was not that representative for the discussed constructions.

The results of the quantitative analysis have proven the statement provided by Fischer (1992). According to this author and the initial assumptions of the current research, *which* and *whom* are in most cases preceded by a preposition. Due to their flexibility, they can indeed easily take the position of the PC within the PP. This evidence verifies the initial assumption that the pronominal relative units entered the syntactic system from the less accessible syntactic roles.

The overall tendency towards the intensive increase of the *wh*-words in the relativization paradigm can be easily illustrated already on the first stages of the linguistic examination. The

primary objective of the current study is to look at the use of *who, which* and *whom* as the relativizers only. As it has been mentioned, the relative function of the *wh*-words was a result of the long-lasting profound changes in the structure of the English sentence, caused by the high level of polysemy of the ME *þat/that* on the one side and the partial influence from other foreign languages on the other. *Whom* was likely to have very actively entered the structure of the relative clause, because it allowed for flexibility, declination and could act as a prepositional complement within the prepositional phrase. Based on the above-provided graphs, tables and discussion one can make the following generalizations:

• since the relativizer *whom* was actively used already at the beginning of the 16th century, it is possible to state the roles of the PC and the DO were the first ones to require additional and more explicit means of relativization. The introduction of *who* and *whom* in these particular structures, allowed the relative clause to further advance in its development. The cause for this phenomenon is likely to have had a morphological character due to the inability of the indeclinable *that* to change its form and act in the role of the prepositional complement.

• because the relativizer *who* was not actively presented in the subject role and once introduced, was spread throughout the syntactic system of the LME and the EModE language at a rather fast pace, it is possible to state that the cause of such a change had a more semantic character. It means that the invariable *that* could still frequently relativize NPs in the role of the SU, but the necessity to mark the meaning of animateness, resulted in the excessive use of the pronominal relativization strategy alternatively to fill the existing gap and support the invariable one. There was certain interchangeable relation between the relative units representing different paradigms.

• distinction between restrictive and non-restrictive relative clauses was likely to have been set during the LME and EModE periods and the intensive use of the *wh*-relatives for relativizing of noun phrases separated by comma in the main clause can serve as a reliable evidence of this hypothesis.

• it is assumed that the decrease of the normalized frequencies of the SU, DO and PC relative clauses is related to the introduction of the gap relativization strategy.

### 3.4.1 Distribution of *which* as the relative marker

The overall analysis of the distribution of the pronominal relative markers within the EEBO corpus has already shown that *which* was very frequently used in the LME and the EModE sentences. As soon as it started to be used in different syntactic roles, the frequency of *that*

decreased and *which* was actively performing the roles of the SU, DO and PC. The following examples demonstrate how this relative marker behaved within the examined structures.

(65) but this thing [RC **which** is apparauntelye false], repugnaunte to reason.

(EEBO, James Harrison 1547).

(66) and that the thing [RC **which** he heard] was more than man could do.

(EEBO, Erasmus Desiderius 1536).

(67) thynke on this day [RC **in which** ye came out of egipt out of the house of bon dage].

(EEBO, No authors listed 1560).

The above-provided examples 65, 66 and 67 demonstrate that the pronominal relativizer *which* was frequently used in all syntactic positions already in the 16th century and its flexibility allowed to fill the gap and satisfy the grammatical demand. This can serve as an evidence that it was a universal pronominal marker that was competing with the invariable counterpart to a great extent. The obtained evidence demonstrates that the relatives available during the LME period did not parallel in all ways as they do in Present-Day English. Whereas the *wh*-relatives are used in non-restrictive sentences and *which* follows inanimate antecedents nowadays, the situation was different during the LME period. *Which* followed animate and inanimate NPs and could be used in restrictive and non-restrictive relative sentences. This phenomenon serves as reliable proof for the fact that the RC was elaborated during the examined periods and the mentioned dichotomies between animate and inanimate relative markers, restrictive and non-restrictive relative clauses were finally fixed.

(68) and glorify youre father [RC **which** is in heven].        (EEBO, William Tyndale 1534).

(69) Thinges [RC **which** are vnpossible with men] are possible with god.

(EEBO, William Tyndale 1534).

(70) and in iuly brought into scotland: xiij: prises of english men [RC **which** he had taken].

(EEBO, Raphael Holinshed 1577).

(71) before the lord thy god, in the place [RC **which** he shal chose].

(EEBO, William Whittingham 1561).

(71) because hee hath appointed a day [RC **in which** he wil iudge the world].

(EEBO, Heinrich Bullinger 1577).

These sentences exemplify how the relativizer *which* was used in the SU, DO and PC positions and followed animate and inanimate NPs at the same time. The current research states that the less accessible roles of the relative markers required more explicit means of relativization and therefore, the *wh*-relatives were at first strongly set in the positions of the DO and PC. Nevertheless, *which* was the one to actively perform the syntactic role of SU from the very beginning of its introduction into the RC system. Interestingly, some of the earliest tokens demonstrate the use of *which* in the SU position and it is possible to assume that from the very beginning of the integration, it actively followed the animate antecedents.

(72) discrecion of the olde man [$_{RC}$ **which** is patron maister or lodesman of the ship].

(EEBO, Marcus Tullius Cicero 1481).

Comparison of the syntactic behaviour of different pronominal relative markers has shown that *which* was the most frequently used relativizer within the discussed structure. Example 72 again supports the implication that it was used as a universal relative marker among the *wh*-relatives. Romaine (2010) states that "in the early seventeenth century *who* still had not entirely taken over the place of *which* as the relative with animate/personal antecedents" (Romaine 2010: 69). Such a statement allows to consider that there was an intermediate phase between the period when *that* was the universal relativizer and the time when the pronominal relative markers were strongly set in various positions within the relative clause. This was the time when *which* was intensively used in all syntactic roles and was regularly supplanting *that* in all possible contexts. It is also important to mention that the replacement of *which* by the personal relativizer *who* began from the proper-name antecedents. The following Graphs 9, 10 and 11 demonstrate the proportions of *which* in relative clauses of different types. Such graphs provide an overview of the behaviour of this relative marker throughout the entire EEBO corpus.
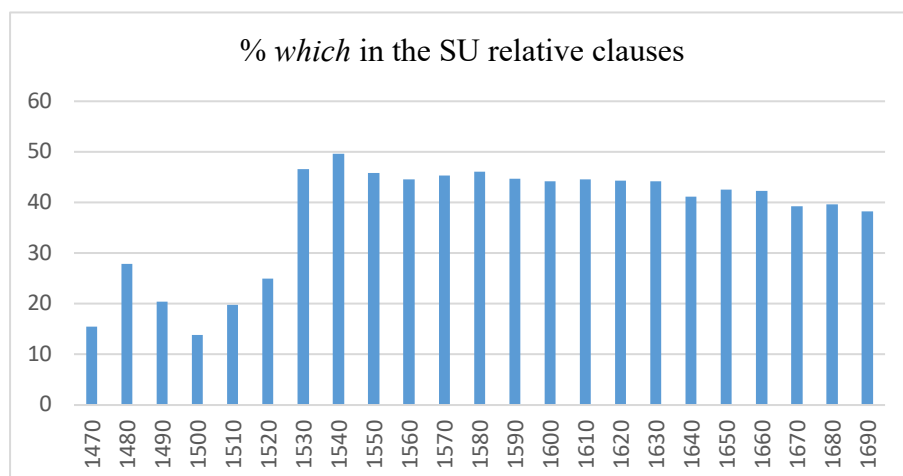


Graph 9: Proportions of *which* in relation to the total number of the SU relative clauses
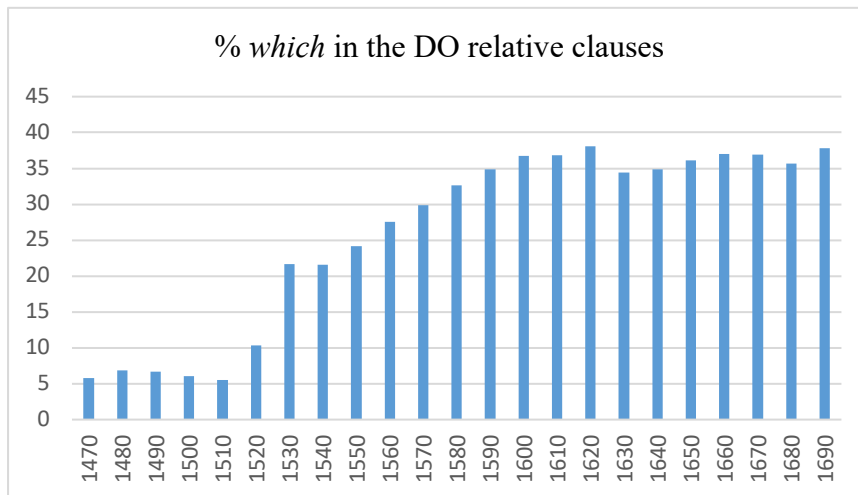
Graph 10: Proportions of *which* in relation to the total number of the DO relative clauses
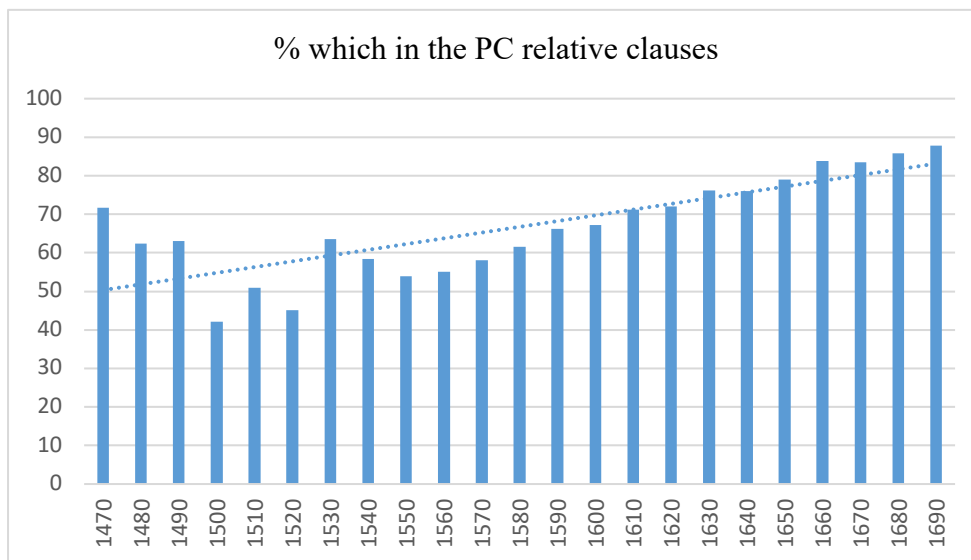


Graph 11: Proportions of *which* in relation to the total number of the PC relative clauses

The frequencies of *which* clearly grew as one can see from all the provided graphs. Whereas it reached 50% in the SU and DO roles, it was dominating in the PC relative clauses in comparison with its animate counterpart *whom. Which* was used on the same proportion level in the SU relative clauses, but it frequencies were growing in the less accessible position of DO.

(73) Ther was a man [RC **whiche** had grete deuocion to saynt augustyn].

(EEBO, Marcus Tullius Cicero 1481).

As it has been mentioned above, *who* started to follow animate antecedents more actively from the 17th century on. This fact can explain the balanced use of its counterpart *which* in the SU

role. Tokens of *who* can be already found in the 16<sup>th</sup> century of the EEBO corpus as in the following example:

(74) and the prince [<sub>RC</sub> **who** was a valyant knight and a sage] closed the letters in his handes.

<div align="right">(EEBO, Jean Froissart 1523).</div>

According to the theoretical implication based on the distribution analysis of *which* in the EEBO corpus, one can state that *which* was an important and widely spread relative marker throughout the entire analysed period. The subordinate relative clause was intensively developed and became clear-cut during the LME and the EModE periods. This allowed for the fixation of the pronominal relative links in the English language system. Although *which* was used in all positions and contexts, in the beginning, it became fixed as the impersonal relativizer during the last decades of the corpus. Nevertheless, the number of occurrences of *which* following a human antecedent was very high and it was a norm for a longer period. The fact that *which* could be followed by a preposition, played a crucial role in the overall process of the *wh*-relative introduction, because *which* could take the position of the PC from the very beginning and therefore, one can support the statement that the *wh*-relatives were intensively embedded in the relative clause from the back end of the AH pivot.

## 3.4.2 Distribution of *who* as the relative marker

It has been already stated that the form *who* was mainly used in the SU role within the RC, the rare instances of its use in the DO can be also found and it could not be used as the PC due to its formal properties. The selected syntax _nn* [who] _v** and _nn* [who] _p* which allow finding the tokens of *who* in the SU and DO roles respectively, also returns relativizers quite reliably and therefore, one can provide the sufficient analysis of the constructions throughout the entire period of the English language development. *Who* was very infrequent in the position of the DO and these occurrences can be viewed only for comparison puroses. The corpus search for *who* in the SU role is built as the sequence of the noun, the respective relativizer and the verb predicate. Such a possibility allows for the efficient overview and analysis of the rendered units. The first instances of *who* in the role of relativizer were introduced after the human antecedent *man* in singular and plural form and with the most frequently represented verbs *to be* and *to have* in the respective person and tense form. The occurrences also appeared on the earlier stages of the language development, but the intensive use of the unit in the relative

clauses started from the 1580s onwards. It is worth analysing one of the first tokens of *who* in EEBO:

(75) (…) the ayde of the Englysshe men [RC **who** were agaynst hym]. (EEBO, Froissart 1523).

The relative pronoun *who* in example 75 was used to establish the connection of the relative clause to the antecedent in the principal one. The qualitative analysis of the semantic features of the relativized antecedents introduced by the NPs allows summarizing which lexical units were the most easily relativized and provide the research with further information regarding the variation in the strategies. As it has been mentioned already, the most frequent antecedents of the pronominal relativizer *who* in the target texts, are *man, people, person, men, God, judge, persons, ministers, king, author woman, priests, princes* and other words with strong personal semantics. The following examples from the EEBO corpus illustrate the use of *who* as the relative marker in the SU and the DO roles respectively:

(76) the man [RC **who** is most culpable], is least of all to be blamed.

(EEBO, George Abbot 1600).

(77) there were no person [RC **who** he could or ought to enuie, for enuie is a disease of the mind]. (EEBO, Jacques Hurault 1595).

Examples 76 and 77 which represent *who* as the relative marker in the function of SU and DO, demonstrate that the pronominal relatizivers referred to animate antecedents from the very beginning of their integration into the system of relativization. Therefore, it is possible to conclude that *who* was predominantly following animate antecedents and it took the role of SU within the LME and the EModE relative clause. This tendency has been also reflected in Present-Day English and supports the assumption that the semantic characteristics and properties of the pronominal relativizers played a crucial role in the manner and intensity of their introduction into the English relative clause.

The EEBO corpus does not contain a lot of instances of *who* as a relative marker until the 1580s when the tendency seems to have intensively grown and finally, this *wh*-form was consistently used within the RC structure. Interestingly, some of the very first outstanding instances of *who* which relativized the plural antecedent *men* in the 1520s, show that this relative marker readily correlated with the NPs in all the syntactic roles. This can be illustrated by the following examples:

(78) and his men [RC **who** were fresshe and lusty] / anone put abacke the naueroyse / who were wery fightyng all the day. (EEBO, Jean Froissart 1523).

(79) his herytage dyed as a saynt in a batayle in bretayne before aulroy by the ayde of the Englysshe men [RC **who** were agaynst hym]. (EEBO, Jean Froissart 1525).

(80) Howe the erle Iames duglas by his valyatnesse incouraged his men [RC **who** were reculed]. (EEBO, Jean Froissart 1525).

All the above-given examples prove again that *who* was used in the SU role as soon as it entered the system of the relative clause. At the same time, it could relativize NPs in any syntactic role and there were no restrictions in this regard at all. Such flexibility and multi-functionality further justify the intensive incorporation of the *wh*-forms into the syntactic system of Late Middle English and Early Modern English. Even in Present-Day English, speakers have difficulties with the choice between *who* and *whom* in the DO position. However, it has been generalized that *who* refers to the subject, whereas its declined form *whom* is used in the roles of the DO and the PC.
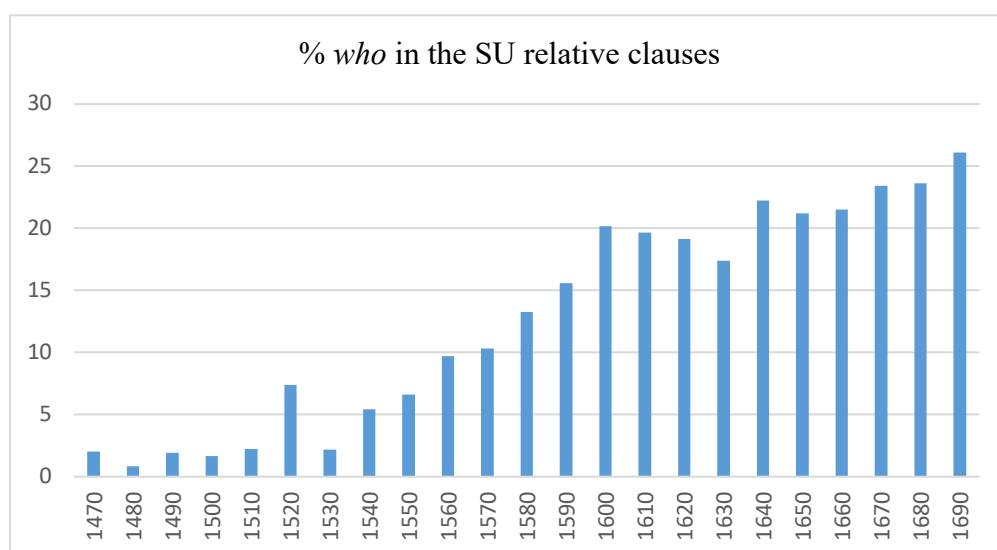


Graph 12: Proportion of *who* in relation to the total number of the SU relative clauses
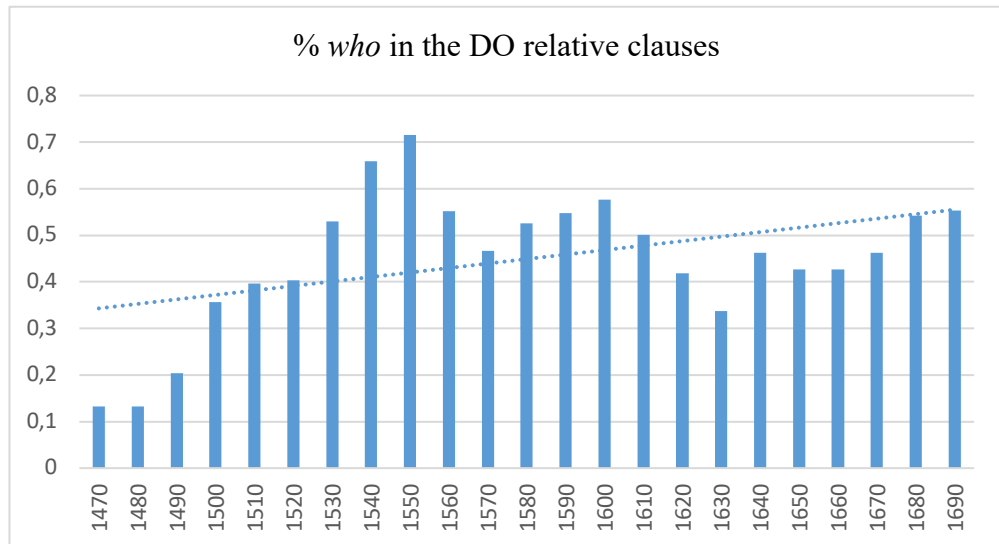
Graph 13: Proportion of *who* in relation to the total number of the DO relative clauses

Graphs 12 and 13 show that the relative marker *who* was very infrequent  in the DO role, reached 26% proportion rate when acting as a subject in the last decades of the EEBO corpus and was completely absent in the PC relative clauses. Graph 12 shows that the proportion of *who* was intensively increasing and the tendency reached the highest frequency points in the 1690s. Such a visualization allows to state that this particular *wh*-form entered the language from the more accessible position. The analysis of the relativizer *who* in the designated period allows to state that the following statements are true:

•       from the sixteenth century onwards, the frequency of *who* is intensively growing in the SU relative clauses following personal antecedents;

• the increase of *who* is related to the activation of the animacy and information parameters within the observed period.

Thus, the evidence for the initial assumptions about the status of *who* in the LME and the EModE relative clauses has been found and one can justify the statement that it lagged in the development into the relative marker when compared with the other *wh*-relatives. It did not substitute *that* and *which* following animate antecedents for a longer time after introduction of the *wh*-relatives. Its frequent use as a relativizer in the role of the subject started from the beginning of the 16th century onwards. The following example provides the evidence which parameters were at work from the very beginning of the corpus.

 (81) than two hundred of them [RC **that** were best horsed] rode forthe / and the rest [RC **who** were an eyght hundred] enbusshed them selfe couertly.                    (EEBO,   Froissart,   1466).

Interestingly, example 81 demonstrates the parallel use of *that* and *who* in the same syntactic role and both followed the respective animate antecedents. This is an instance when two relativization strategies co-existed already and it was the period when the *wh*-words started to actively enter the structure of relative clauses. Such an interchangeable use of different relative markers again proves the dynamic process of the RC development and one can state that the system got well-elaborated in the EModE period, in the last decades of the EEBO corpus.

### 3.4.3 Distribution of *whom* as the relative marker

The objective form of *who whom* entered the LME relative clause from the less accessible PC and the DO roles, because this non-subjective form could be preceded by a preposition and was very flexible. Thus, it could fill the grammatical gaps within the syntactic system of Late Middle English and Early Modern English. It followed only personal antecedents and therefore, can be viewed as the counterpart of *which* in this regard. Interestingly, the first instances of *whom* are found from the very beginning of the corpus and this means that this special relative form was absolutely necessary for the system of relativization. The following examples demonstrate the behaviour of this relative link.

(82) a kyng axid of a wrse man [RC **whom** he reputed able to be a good iuge].

(EEBO, Mubashshir 1485).

(83) this good man hath shewde to me his brother [RC **whom** he hath slayn for loue of vs].

(EEBO, William Caxton 1481).

(84) and he said to this man [RC **to whom** he apperid: be not a ferde for i wos a man os ye be now]. (EEBO, No authors listed 1485).

(85) but rightfull god [RC **to whom** no pryuete is vnknowen suffred hy fyrst to be shed].

(EEBO, No authors listed 1493).

The relative form *whom* was used from the earliest LME decades, because it allowed filling the positions which could not be taken by *that,* especially those of the DO and the PC. The *wh*-relatives took at first the positions which were left vacant by the OE relatives of the demonstrative nature. *Which* and *who* entered the RC from the less accessible positions and quickly spread across all other functions and especially that of the subject. The objective form *whom* was used in the non-subject role only and its frequency in the DO and the PC syntactic roles was rather stable. There was a significant increase in its use within the PP in the texts of later decades.
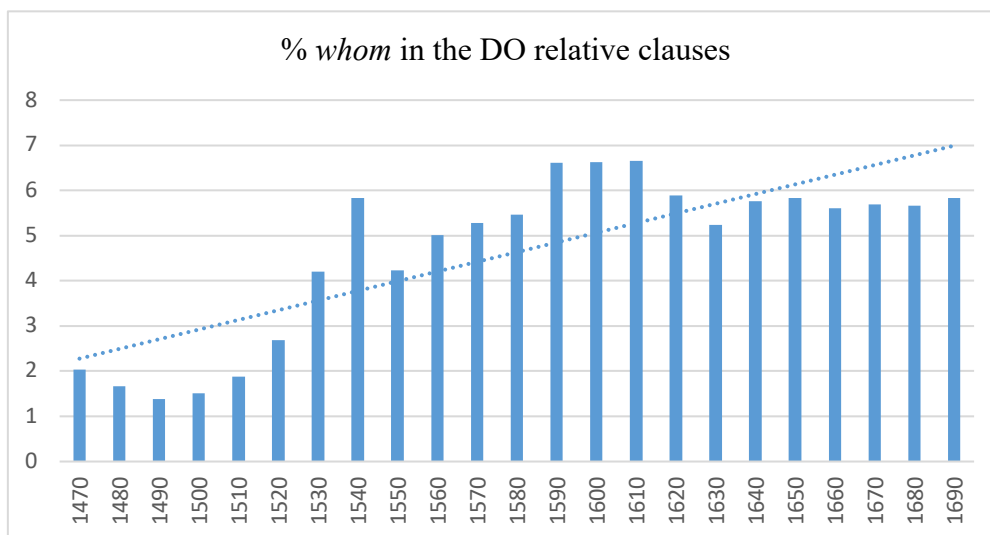
Graph 14: Proportion of *whom* in relation to the total number of the DO relative clauses
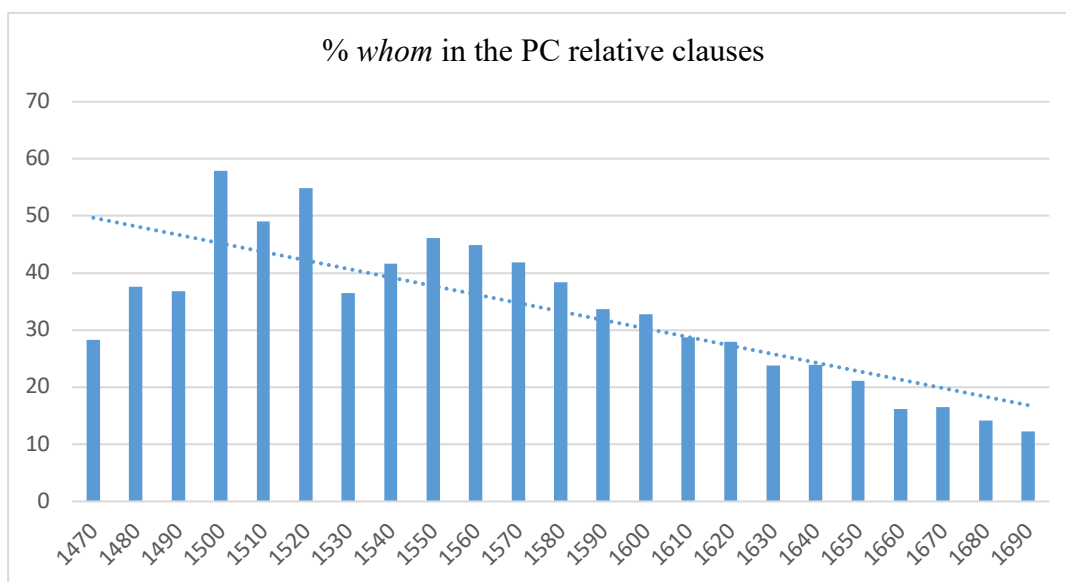


Graph 15: Proportion of *whom* in relation to the total number of the PC relative clauses

Graph 14 demonstrates that the relative marker *whom* was rarely used in the DO position, but it was very frequent in the PC one and Graph 15 shows that it even reached almost 60% proportion. The declined form of *who* was particularly important of the constructions with prepositions. Whereas the use of *whom* in the DO position was rather balanced and kept on the same level starting from the 16th century, its movement in the position of the PC experienced a decrease tendency by the end of the corpus. This is likely to have depended on the text type and certain context conditions. The flexibility of this relative link resulted in the high-frequency numbers in the texts. Although the number of tokens of *whom* is getting lower by the 1690s, these occurrences nevertheless serve as the reliable evidence for the implication that this *wh-*

relative entered the syntactic system of the LME from the least accessible position and played a crucial role in the elaboration of the relative clause during the examined period.

## 4. Conclusion

The overall aim of the current thesis has been to describe the introduction of the pronominal relativizers in Late Middle English and Early Modern English. It has been attempted to trace the category emergence and analyse the phenomenon from a diachronic perspective. The data from the EEBO corpus have been analysed to discuss the tendencies in the *wh*-relatives development and it has been viewed whether there were specific patterns or regular variation in the process. The empirical part of this research includes a quantitative and qualitative analyses of frequencies and proportions of different relative markers between the 1470s and the 1690s.

Whereas *that* functioned as a universal relative marker in all periods of Middle English and Modern English, the relative pronouns deriving from interrogative ones entered the relative clause in the ME period. The textual evidence from the EEBO corpus demonstrates how the category further advanced and how its emergence influenced the entire syntactic system of English. The obtained results have shown that the *wh*-relatives took the least accessible position of the prepositional complement within the prepositional phrase from the very beginning. They were also rather frequently used in the subject and direct object syntactic roles starting from the middle of the 16th century. The pronominal relative marker *which* was a kind of a universal relativizer within the pronominal relativization paradigm. *That* remained the dominant relative marker and the decrease in its frequency by the later decades of the 17th century can be explained by the introduction of the *wh*-relatives and possible rise of zero relativization paradigm.

Analysis of the textual evidence has also demonstrated that the *wh*-relativizers enabled the distinction between personal and impersonal relativized antecedents, restrictive and non-restrictive relative clauses. Qualitative analysis of the relativized antecedents and quantitative analysis of the constructions with relativized noun phrases separated by comma have provided evidence for such assumptions. *That, which* followed animate antecedents, whereas *who, whom* served for relativization of the inanimate ones. With regard to the information parameter, the obtained occurrences have shown that the relative marker *which* was dominating in non-restrictive relative clauses and the frequency of *who* in this position was intensively growing. This allows to state that the information parameter was integrated and the distinction between restrictive and non-restrictive clauses was finally set.

The current research on the LME and EModE relativizers has focused on the main tendencies which characterized the process of the relativization transformation. The entire mechanism of the language development at any period can be further defined by the notions of

specification, intensive elaboration and overall optimization of its structure. These tendencies can be explained by the underlying language economy law which facilitates human communication in general. The discussion has aimed at the verification of the statement that there were always three different strategies for the relativization in different periods of the English language development: the Old English, the Middle English, the Modern English. The invariable, pronominal and gap relativization modes were presented, marked by the relative markers of different nature during every period. Various factors, such as internal language transformations and external conditions including the influence of foreign languages, served as rather strong triggers for the introduction of the *wh*-forms into the syntactic system of the English language. Since the relative markers could be characterized by the polysemantic nature and performed several syntactic roles within the sentence at the same time, new linguistic units were introduced to convey necessary grammatical and semantic meaning. The OE and ME relativization paradigms were rather similar and had lots in common, but the LME texts demonstrate that the RC structure advanced throughout the time and the relation between the relative clause and the relativized noun phrase was changing constantly and attaining further forms and kinds of specification.

This paper has analysed the EEBO corpus texts based on the traditional definition of the relative clause, relativization and the previously elaborated theory of Accessibility Hierarchy. This theory, according to which the target wh-forms *who, which* and *whom* entered the LME grammar in the specific sequence, has been applied in the analysis and the proofs have been found that the LME interrogative relativizers were more likely to enter the relative clause from the less accessible positions. This can be explained by the fact that the invariable *that* was being used less frequently for the relativization of the NPs in the positions of the PC and the DO, whereas the position of the SU was still being relativized by the demonstrative-based relative marker. Another important fact discovered in the research is the behaviour of the *wh*-relatives as soon as they entered the LME language. After each of the target relativizers appeared in the texts for several times, they were likely to spread and be intensively used in the texts produced on the later stages of development.

To summarize the findings of the current research, one needs to refer to two basic aspects representing the behaviour of the *wh*-forms in the LME complex sentence: the way they entered the syntactic system as relativizers and the tendencies which could be observed in their spread throughout the LME and EModE texts. It is necessary to emphasize that the pronominal paradigm of the relative markers was designed to mark quite a distinct type of the co-reference between the additional information provided by the RC and the relativized antecedent

represented by the noun phrase. The pronominal relativizers in the LME texts demonstrated even more flexibility and tight correlation in this respect and resembled the type of relativization in the Modern German language. Unlike the inflected forms intensively used on the earlier stages of the English language evolution, the LME period can be characterized by the acquisition of the indeclinable forms and only the relative *who* still was used in its objective form *whom.* Introduction of the *wh*-relatives can be explained by the need of more explicit means of relativization for the less accessible syntactic positions in the relative clause.

As it has been mentioned already, this work has also based its analysis on the utilization of several parameters concerning the elaboration of the LME relative clause. The first significant factor is the one of animacy which allows discussing the interchangeable use of different relative markers like the one depending on the semantic load of the relativized noun phrase. Although the formally marked distinction between animate and inanimate antecedents appeared in the later decades of the 16$^{th}$ century and all the mentioned relativizers could follow the antecedents of different nature, there were still trends to use *who, whom* with the animate antecedents and this resulted in the later introduction of the rules in this regard. Thus, the PDE norm requires one to opt for *who* when the relativized unit is animate. *Which* and *that* remained strongly fixated in the positions after the inanimate antecedents and this has remained a strong tendency until now. Another important parameter discussed in this paper is one of restrictiveness. Already on the earlier stages of the language development, from the 14$^{th}$ - 15$^{th}$ century, there was a formally marked distinction between relative clauses which could either restrict or simply provide additional information about the relativized NP in the main clause. In this case, one can speak about the dichotomy: the invariable relative marker was gradually taking strong positions in restrictive sentences, whereas the interrogatives were used in the non-restrictive context. The fact that these processes were almost finalized within the discussed period and the English syntax already resembled the PDE structure in the 1690s, serves as a plausible justification, why the relativization system was finally shaped exactly during that period. The important parameter which was taken as the basic criterion for the research analysis, was the syntactic role of the relativizers and this factor served as the central filter for the text evidence selection and production of the logical assumptions. Analysis of the textual evidence has proven that the rising frequency of the *wh*-relatives was connected with the accessibility of their syntactic roles in relative clauses.

If one observes the sequence in which the *wh*-forms *who, whom* and *which* entered the LME texts, it is possible to state the declined form *whom* appeared already at the beginning of the 16$^{th}$ century and took the DO and PC positions. This phenomenon can be explained by the

high level of the unit flexibility and inability of *that* to effectively relativize antecedents in such a context. Substitution of the invariable relative marker in this particular position was necessary and it was gradually leaving this role that served as the primary trigger of the *wh*-pronoun introduction into the relative clause. This transformation had morphosyntactic character because it related to different levels of linguistic integration. The relativizer *who* which was activated later, was used to relativize the PC and DO comparatively rarely and the fact that it was associated with the SU context, presents the reason, why it began to be intensively used only on the later stages of the language development. Thus, there was a direct correlation between the gradual loss of power of *that* due to its high polysemy and the need to specify the context on the one side and the active position of the form *whom* which suited the type of co-reference on the other. It possessed necessary morphological features which allowed it to relativize noun phrases in the mentioned positions. This paper takes into account that there was a partial impact of foreign languages and Old French could indeed provide the effect on the choice of the *wh*-pronouns as relativizers, but this factor can be viewed only as a complementary one.

One can find very few instances of *who* as a relative marker before the 1580s and although it could be found as having relativized NPs in different syntactic positions, *that* remained the dominant relative marker in this respect. However, one should emphasize that as soon as *who* appeared in the structure of relative clauses, it climbed the AH axis at a very fast pace and its frequency after the 1580s supports the idea that the animacy parameter was intensively activated during that period. The authors of the texts in the EEBO corpus realized the advantages of the *wh*-forms as relativizers and the phenomenon of the context specification in the RC was dynamically promoted in the LME and EModE syntax. It has been even mentioned that the distinction between animate and inanimate antecedents was conditioned by various social norms such as the necessity to mark the superiority of the person of the higher social class and also, it has been mentioned that it was more prestigious to use more specific and logical forms, prefer the pronominal and invariable relativizers to the gap relativization mode.

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*Appendix I: Abstract*

The current thesis discusses development of relative markers in Late Middle English and Early Modern English, introduction of the pronominal relativizers and how this linguistic phenomenon influenced elaboration of the syntactic system of English in general. It has been hypothesized that the rising frequency of relative pronouns deriving from interrogative ones is related to the accessibility of their syntactic roles in relative clauses. Theoretically, this research refers to the previous discussion regarding competition between different relativization strategies in English and description of the category of the *wh*-relatives from the perspective of Accessibility Hierarchy. Empirically, it is based on the quantitative and qualitative analysis of *that, who, whom* and *which* in texts of the *Early English Books Online* corpus. Specific search syntax is suggested to obtain occurrences which can serve as reliable evidence to support the initial hypotheses stated in the paper.

It is argued that the increase in frequency of the *wh*-relativizers is connected with such factors as multifunctionality of the invariable *that* and its inability to act as a prepositional complement, probable rise of the gap relativization strategy, influence of other languages with the strong pronominal relativization patterns, necessity to articulate distinction between animate and inanimate relativized noun phrases, restrictive and non-restrictive relative clauses. The less accessible syntactic roles in relative clauses required more explicit means of relativization and the *wh*-pronouns were able to fill functional gaps in relative clauses.

It has been assumed that the pronominal relative markers entered the relativization system of Middle English from the low end of the Accessibility Hierarchy axis and this means that they at first acted as prepositional complements within prepositional phrases and direct objects. The empirical evidence has demonstrated that *which* was the most frequent pronominal relativizer, *which* and *whom* were the only relative markers from the discussed ones which took the positions of prepositional complements. Once the *wh*-relatives were introduced into any type of the relative clauses, they were embedded in the language very fast. It is possible to trace this tendency even on the example of subject relative clauses in the EBBO corpus. It has been concluded that the introduction of the pronominal relative markers is a multi-causal phenomenon. The necessity to find a suitable formal unit to take the role of a prepositional complement, distinguish between different types of antecedents, restrictive and non-restrictive information expressed in relative clauses can be defined as important driving forces of the whole process.

*Appendix II: Zusammenfassung*

Die vorliegende Diplomarbeit beschäftigt sich mit der Entwicklung von Verbindungselementen in Relativsätzen im Spätmittelenglischen und Frühneuenglischen, dem Einstieg von Relativpronomen und dem generellen Einfluss von diesem Phänomen auf die Syntax vom Englischen. Es wurde die Hypothese aufgestellt, dass die steigende Häufigkeit von Relativpronomen, die von Interrogativpronomen stammten, sich auf die kognitive Erreichbarkeit von ihren syntaktischen Funktionen in Relativsätzen bezieht. Theoretisch greift diese Forschungsarbeit auf die vorangegangene Diskussion betreffend den Wettbewerb zwischen verschiedenen Relativstrategien im Englischen und die Beschreibung von der Kategorie von Relativpronomen aus der Perspektive der Zugänglichkeitshierarchie zurück. Empirisch basiert sie auf der quantitativer und qualitativer Analyse von *that, who, whom* und *which* in den Texten vom Korpus *Early English Books Online.* Eine bestimmte Suchsyntax wird benutzt, um die passenden Textbelege zu finden, die die Ausgangshypothesen zu überprüfen erlauben.

Es wird argumentiert, dass der Frequenzanstieg von *wh*-Pronomen im Zusammenhang mit den folgenden Faktoren betrachtet werden soll: die Multifunktionalität vom invariablen *that* und seine Unfähigkeit als eine Präpositional-Ergänzung fungieren; eine wahrscheinliche Zunahme von der Null-Relativisierungsstrategie; der Einfluss von Fremdsprachen; der Bedarf nach Unterscheidung zwischen persönlichen und unpersönlichen relativisierten Nominalphrasen und zwischen restriktiven und nicht restriktiven Relativsätzen. Die untergeordneten Positionen in der Akzessibilitätshierarchie brauchen ausdrücklichere Relativisierungsmittel und die *wh*-Pronomen konnten solche Funktionslücken schließen.

Es wird angenommen, dass die Relativpronomen die mittelenglischen Relativsätze von den unteren Positionen der Zugänglichkeitshierarchie eintraten. Zuerst übernahmen sie die Funktionen von der Präpositional-Ergänzung und direktem Objekt in Relativsätzen. Der empirische Nachweis zeigt, dass das Relativpronomen *which* am häufigsten verwendet wurde, *which* und *whom* fungierten effektiv als Präpositional-Ergänzungen. Nach der Einführung von Relativpronomen, wurden sie sehr intensiv in der Sprache eingebettet. Diese Tendenz wird durch die Subjekt-Relativsätze auch veranschaulicht. Die Einführung von den Relativpronomen in Relativsätzen ist ein multikausaler Prozess und es gab einen Bedarf nach neuen Relativierungsmittel, die alle neuen funktionalen Anforderungen umsetzen konnten.