

RELATIVE CLAUSES IN AMAKA AZUIKE'S 'VIOLATED'

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the usage of the relative clause as a wealthy, crucial and complicated syntactic procedure in modern English Literature through the examination of Amaka Azuike's Violated, a short play. The study determined the use of relative clauses in terms of their frequency of occurrence and type used, and it showed that English language speakers mostly attempt to use the "easier" type of the relative clauses to combine sentences for clarity of relaying messages. The paper extracted examples of relative clauses from Violated to determine its aim of identifying the types of relative clauses used and the frequency of occurrence as well as the functions of the relative clauses in the play. The study also exposed the clarity the reader derives from the author's use of relative clauses in creating a visible mental picture of issues presented in the story. The study adopted the descriptive grammar framework to account for the way relative clauses have been used in the play by the author. The study found that the author of the text used finite relative clauses and only one complex relative clause. Also, it discovered that the usage of relative clauses made the story quite state-of-the-art in style.

Keywords: Violated, Relative Clause, Restrictive Relative Clause, Non-restrictive Relative Clause, Descriptive Grammar

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INTRODUCTION

Language is used to express thoughts, plans, and feelings that are typically difficult to say. In most conversational situations, language makes communication easy rather than difficult. The objective is to ensure that the parties involved comprehend the communication, which is a two-way process. The use of relative clauses, which allow communicators to be more specific and provide additional information about the referent, makes this goal possible and makes the verbal exchange or information more exciting and informative. The purpose of this paper is to investigate Amaka Azuike's use of English relative clauses in *Violated* and how this relates to studying and using relative clauses in English. By implication, this study is an attempt to improve the study of English as a second language in Nigeria. This is because many people find it difficult, especially when it involves complicated topics like using relative clauses in conversation. Conversation between language learners and users is essential. Therefore, it is essential for inexperienced English speakers and users in Nigeria to have a thorough understanding of the language's positive aspects, particularly its grammar. Because of the grammatical differences that exist between the English language and the mother tongues of the speakers, a relative clause, also known as "relativisation," is unquestionably one of the factors that learners and users of English need to have solid expertise in. This is especially true when you consider that relative clauses are considered to be one of the most difficult and challenging areas for a few beginners of English as a second language.

A relative clause—also known as an "adjective" clause—primarily modifies a noun or pronoun. It typically includes a relative pronoun (such as "who," "whom," "whose," "that," or "that") or, in rare instances, a relative adverb (such as "when," "in which," or "why"). Because of their function as subordinate or lower clauses, relative clauses cannot stand on their own as complete sentences. By relating to the noun or pronoun that is being modified within the expression, the relative pronoun—also known as an adverb—is used to connect a relative clause to an independent clause. Because of their intricate syntactic structures, relative clauses present challenges for English learners and speakers of English as a second language. They either misuse relative clauses or find it challenging to arrange or position relative clauses in sentences. A relative clause changes a noun or pronoun and is usually introduced by a relative pronoun (like "who," "whom," "whose," "that," or "that") or a relative adverb (like "when," "where," or "why"). According to Huddleston and Pullum (2005), a relative clause is a distinct type of subordinate clause whose primary purpose is to modify a noun or nominal. They cannot stand on their own as complete sentences because they are subordinate or dependent clauses. By referring to the noun or pronoun that is being modified in the sentence, the relative pronoun—also known as the adverb—connects the relative clause to an independent clause. Because they enable writers to be more specific, relative clauses are important because they make writing more interesting and sophisticated. Despite their importance, some writers frequently use relative clauses incorrectly, which presents significant difficulties. Understanding relative clause structure, selecting the appropriate pronoun (or adverb), using appropriate punctuation, and maintaining subject-verb agreement are frequently the most common issues.

Miller (2002) depicted a clause as a unit which consists of a verb, its complement and its adjunct. In contrast, Krieder (1998) asserted that a clause is merely a word production that expresses a proposition but is not a sentence in and of itself. According to these definitions, a clause is a collection of expressions that make up a grammar and contain at least one subject and a verb. A clause may or may not be a part of a sentence, but it is not always a sentence. The relative clause under investigation in *Violated* is a type of subordinate clause. Clauses can be main or subordinate.

Writing, learning and fluency all benefit greatly from an excellent understanding of grammar, as does the ability to learn a foreign language such as English. In addition, it improves the ability of learners to think broadly. Grammar is essential to understanding English as a second language; it lays the foundation for effective oral communication and makes content more understandable and exciting. An important aspect of English grammar is the formation of relative clauses. It involves the explicit use of

relative pronouns in the construction of complex sentences, which poses challenges for English learners and users.

Because relative clauses are rich English syntactic structures and can impede effective communication due to their semantic and syntactic complexity, they pose a challenge for some Nigerian students and recent graduates. This study looked at how relative clauses are used in Amaka Azuike's *Violated* and how they affect how the text conveys its message and how they affect English teaching. As a result, the findings of this study suggest that literary texts ought to be extensively utilized in the instruction of English grammar.

Literature Review

Relative Clause

A relative clause is a type of clause. It has a subject and a verb, but cannot stand alone as a sentence. It's sometimes called an "adjective clause" because it acts like an adjective — it gives more information about the noun. Relative clauses always begin with a "relative pronoun," which replaces a noun, noun phrase, or pronoun when combining sentences. Relative clauses are the connectives we use to define — who, what, when, whose, and where — a noun that appears before a sentence.

Brinton and Brinton (2010) argued that relative clauses simply convey a quality or feature of the modified noun. According to Leech and Svartvik (1994), a relative clause, also known as an adjective clause, is a subordinate clause that basically functions to modify a noun. They claimed that relative clauses provide an answer to the question "which," such as "Which girl?" The woman with red hair."

According to Nau (2012), a relative clause combines two clauses. This combination of clauses is possible when both the main clause and the clause describe a situation in which a common participant becomes the clause. She went on to say that most relative clauses are syntactically related to nouns. The information of relative clauses may affect the meaning of noun phrases more or less. This suggests that mention of the noun it refers to is required to understand the meaning of a relative clause.

According to Murphy (2000), a relative clause tells us who or what the speaker is referring to or what kind of person or thing they are referring to. Relative clauses make writing more sophisticated and enable the speaker to be more specific while also providing additional information about the referent. According to Leech (1983), a back-pointing element uses a relative clause for a variety of sub-clause types. According to Oshima and Hogue (1999), a relative clause is an adjective-like dependent clause; essentially, it alters a noun or pronoun. Adjective clauses are also relative clauses because of this.

Relative clauses can be finite or non-finite. The relative pronouns known as relativizers are used to introduce finite relative clauses. Bringing down and Locke (2002) recognized the relativizers in English as "who", "whom", "whose" "which", "that", "where", "when", "why" and "zero (0)".

Apart from relative pronouns, finite clauses use action words to show tenses. Consider the statement, "My sister is the girl in the black dress." Then again, the non-finite relative provision utilizes "- ing" or "- ed" structure. It makes no sense at all. Consider the example, "The young lady wearing dark dress is my sister" (Mahendra 2019).

A set of relative pronouns like that, which, who, whom, and whose are used to introduce relative clauses, which are dependent clauses that modify nouns. They are also referred to as adjective clauses because they function as adjectives, but they come after the head noun as post-nominal modifiers (Crown, 2008). Additionally, relative clauses are constructed through wh-movement: The NP in the relative clauses that corresponds to the noun phrase in the main clause is relocated by this rule to the front of the relative clauses, leaving a gap where it was previously. A relative pronoun takes the place of the NP created by the wh-movement, such as "The movie (that we saw the movie) was really scary."

The Structure of Relative Clauses

Like all clauses, relative clauses have a subject and a verb, and a relative pronoun—also known as an adverb—usually follows and refers back to the noun or pronoun it modifies.

1. The students who came first in the competition were rewarded by the college. In the sentence above, the relative pronoun “who” introduces the relative clause “who came first in the competition.” The relative clause modifies the plural noun “students.” The word “who” is the subject of the relative clause and “were” the verb.
2. It was an event that influenced my decision in life. In this sentence, the relative pronoun “that” introduces the relative clause “that influenced my decision in life,” which modifies the singular noun “event.” The word “that” is the subject of the relative clause and “influenced” is the verb.
3. In some instances, the pronoun follows a preposition (although a relative pronoun (or adverb) usually introduces a relative clause)
4. God has given us so many things for which we are deeply thankful. In this sentence, the relative pronoun “which” is preceded by the preposition “for,” clarifying the relationship of the relative clause to the noun it modifies.

Defining Properties of Relative Clauses

1. A relative clause is subordinated.
2. A relative clause is connected to surrounding material by a pivot constituent.

Mark de Vries (2001) argued that the pivot is a constituent semantically shared by the matrix clause and the relative clause. Often it is a noun phrase. If it appears to be spelled out inside the matrix clause, it can be recognized as an antecedent. This yields [matrix... [N RC] ...], where the relative clause contains a gap (which may be filled by a relative pronoun). If the pivot is spelled out inside the relative clause, the construction is head internal: [matrix...[RC...NP...]...]. In this case the matrix contains the gap, which is filled by the whole relative construction (as sketched), or — if RC is preposed—by a demonstrative (a correlative construction). In my view, variation concerning the position and content of the gap is expected, since there are different strategies to cope with the dimensionality problem that the pivot must be in two sentences at once — because every linguistic construction must be linearized. If this were not so, no gap would be needed at all.

Types of Relative Clauses

Quirk et al. (1985) and Quirk et al. (1973) argued that based on the relative pronoun's function as subject, object, complement, or prepositional complement, English relative clauses can be divided into restrictive and non-restrictive clauses. A clause that restricts and adds necessary information to the referent of the modified noun phrase is known as a restrictive relative clause. For example, “My sister who lives in Jos is a teacher.” A non-restrictive relative clause, on the other hand, is a clause that does not restrict the noun’s referent, and it adds additional and unnecessary information about the modified noun (the head noun). That is, the meaning of the expression is not affected even when the non-restrictive clause is deleted from the sentence. It is indicated by the commas around it. For example, “The young lady, **who is a typist**, is Mary Peters.

Restrictive Relative Clauses

A restrictive relative clause is crucial to the meaning of the sentence because it limits or defines the meaning of the word it modifies. Commas do not cause restrictive relative clauses to break. They serve the purpose of providing crucial information. The relative pronouns “that” and “who” are used to introduce essential information, which is not separated by commas.

According to Nelson (2001), a restrictive modifier serves to define the noun. It becomes obligatory modifier to the noun antecedent, for example, "The student who got the highest grade was given a prize". The clause, "who got the highest grade," defines precisely which student was given the prize.

According to Yule (1998), the following are some criteria for restrictive clauses:

First, it's about the message and meaning being conveyed. You set the standard. This suggests that they limit or define references to noun antecedents. They reflect the identity and classification of the person or thing in question. The information included is essential information, necessary to convey the meaning of the sentence. Therefore, the information is not additional, but mandatory - if the clause is removed, the sentence loses its meaning.

The second requirement is that they are immediately followed by a noun prefix without using a comma or hyphen as a separator. According to Yule (1998), separators create a linguistic distinction between relative clauses and nouns. Mahendra (2019) elaborates on Yule's point that relative clauses are linguistically closer to noun antecedents when they are not followed by commas or hyphens; they become one and cannot be deleted because the meaning of the noun and the entire sentence are lost.

Other requirements include: in order to more precisely identify who or what is being discussed, they are following a general antecedent such as anyone, any person, everyone, or everything; they have no quantity expression such as many of whom, none of which; they are italicized with relative pronoun "that" or "zero pronoun" as they are commonly shorter and have more common meaning.

Examples of Restrictive Relative Clauses

"I feel like eating meat that is really, really spicy," said Mary.

In this sentence, "that is really, really spicy" is essential information because it describes the meat Mary wants to eat, so it is not enclosed in commas.

"Sir, Peter is the **one who ordered the Uber.**"

In this sentence, "who ordered the Uber" is essential information because it describes 'Peter,' the one who ordered it, and is not enclosed in commas.

Non-restrictive Relative Clauses

A noun or pronoun whose meaning is already defined or limited is the subject of a non-restrictive relative clause. Consequently, the additional information is not necessary, and removing the non-restrictive element would not significantly alter your comprehension of the sentence. It is used to provide information that is not necessary. The relative pronouns "which" and "who" are used to introduce non-essential information, which is enclosed in commas.

The utilization of non-prohibitive conditions as a modifier is discretionary. According to Mahendra (2019), the use of separation markers like commas and separators, which create linguistic distance between relative clauses, their noun antecedents, and the sentence as a whole, is the most obvious characteristic. This means that a non-restrictive clause only adds information that can be removed without changing the meaning of the sentence as a whole.

The following example was provided by Nelson (2001): "The student, who comes from Birmingham, was given a prize." The relative clause, who comes from Birmingham, is separated from the whole sentence by commas. This implies that the relative clause does not define precisely which student, from among all the students in the class, was given a prize.

Yule (1998) identified nine criteria for examining non-restrictive clauses. These are: (i) They are non-defining (ii) They bring additional/extra information for the sentence (iii) They are separated by separation markers like commas and dashes (iv) The non-antecedent may be a proper noun (v) They are only comments to the noun antecedent (vi) They may have quantity expression such as many of whom, none of which (vii) They are not initialized with relative pronoun "that" or "zero pronoun" (viii) They follow non-general antecedent. The antecedents are usually more specific. They may have definite articles such

as 'the,' or other specific modifiers such as adjective phrases or prepositional phrases (ix) They are commonly longer and have less common meaning.

Example of Non-restrictive Relative Clauses

Joe, who is not only intelligent but also smart and friendly, is a teacher at the Aspire Academy for Excellence.

In this sentence, we do not need to know that Joe is intelligent and also smart and friendly to know he is a teacher at the Aspire Academy for Excellence, so the relative clause starting with the relative pronouns "who" is non-essential information and is thus enclosed in commas.

Review of Relative Clauses in Literary Texts

Mahendra's (2019) review of Sanubari's (2015) research on relative clauses in Jack London's *South of the Slot* attempts to identify the different kinds of relative clauses in the short story. The results demonstrated that relative clauses can be categorized according to their function and structure. Further discoveries uncovered that general provisions add to portray the principal characters, the setting of spot, and the portrayal of the story.

In Edward Lear's *Complete Nonsense*, Mahendra also looked at 212 limericks and discovered 207 relative clauses in them. Restrictive and non-restrictive relative clauses are the two types of relative clauses that fall under the communicative function category. Lear's use of relative clauses to achieve the style of the text, as reflected in the use of relative clauses, the noun antecedent, drawings, and functions of relative clauses, is dominated by non-restrictive clauses.

Nau examined relative clauses in narrative fiction. The study found that in narrative texts, finite relative clauses, which are typically found in European languages, serve a number of important functions. Different translation equivalents show that these functions are connected to constructions' structural and semantic properties. According to Nau (2011), the investigation revealed: i) Because they are subordinate, relative clauses can be utilized to combine clauses with a shared participant (ii); In most cases, relative clauses are noun modifiers (either as part of the noun phrase that is headed by that noun or as an independent NP adjacent to that noun); (iii) As nominalizations, relative clauses present an event or state as an entity. iv) Relative clauses may serve as focusing devices.

Mudhor (2017) found 472 relative clause constructions in *The Great Gatsby* by Francis Scott Key Fitzgerald when she looked at the book's relative clauses. There are five types of them relative pronoun, non-finite verb, omitted relative pronoun, relative adverb, sentential relative clauses. The investigation also found in the novel restrictive and non-restrictive clauses.

Theoretical Framework

The examination of the utilization of relative provisions utilized in Violated is accomplished inside the system of elucidating language structure. The study's objective is not to critique the use of relative clauses in the text but rather to describe how they have been used to obtain the writer's style, which is why descriptive grammar was chosen for this evaluation. In response to this, a descriptive approach was used to explain the structure and nature of the relative clauses used in the text. According to Quirk & Greenbaum (1990) in Hinkel (2018), a descriptive grammar of a language looks at how standard and nonstandard varieties of the language are used in everyday life by speakers from all walks of life. In other words, the goal of descriptive grammar is to describe a language's structure, syntactic rules, and sentence and phrase constructions. According to Leech, Deuchar, & Hoogenraad (2006) in Hinkel, a descriptive study of any language's grammar is non-judgmental and does not aim to identify "good" or "bad" language, "correct" or "incorrect" structures, or grammatical or ungrammatical forms. According to Leech, Deuchar, & Hoogenraad (2006) in Hinkel, a non-judgmental examination of a language's grammar does not aim to

identify "suitable" or "horrific" language, "correct" or "incorrect" systems, or grammatical or ungrammatical writing.

Usually, descriptive grammar is studied to find out how a language's grammar is actually used in different situations and for different things. According to Leech, Deuchar, and Hoogenraad (2006) in Hinkel (2018), descriptive grammar of a language is a concept that tries to explain how a particular language works from an academic perspective.

METHODOLOGY

The short play *Violated* by Amaka Azuike spans eighteen pages. Relative clauses were cautiously identified and decided on for evaluation. Eight sentences containing nine relative clauses had been discovered and represented on a bar chart. The chart was created with the aid of Microsoft Excel sheet. The usage of the chart gives a graphical illustration of the RCs for ease of comprehension. The essence of the analysis became to discover the sort of relative clauses, their frequency of prevalence and the capabilities of the relative clauses used inside the textual content.

FINDINGS

The following were the findings of the study:

- There are nine relative clauses in the story used as restrictive relative clauses.
- Eight of the nine relative clauses used are finite in nature.
- The author employed the use of only one complex relative clause – the use of a pronoun proceeded by a preposition.
- The author used restrictive relative clauses because the relative clauses were considered essential to the meaning of the sentences.
- The relative clauses were employed for clarity of presentation and for a vivid picture of the nouns described.
- Relative clauses give images of the subjects so that the readers can clearly see a mental picture of what the author is describing.
- Relative clauses give additional information about something without starting another sentence. By combining sentences with a relative clause, the story becomes more fluent through avoiding the repetition of certain words.

DISCUSSION

Relative Clauses in *Violated*

- She found she was a little girl again, terrified by an intruder who had entered her room. (p. 1)
- He wore a dark suit over a sky-blue shirt which was finished off with a red tie. (p.1)
- Like he had heard her, her father looked at her with a smile on his face, feeling smug like one who had won already. (p. 6)
- An adulterous wife quits a good marriage, leaving behind a distraught daughter who becomes clinically depressed. (p. 8)
- The swiftness with which she dismissed comments about him; (p. 11)
- 'Do you know him to be a good father who stood by you when your mother deserted you years ago (p. 13)'

- The evidence which nailed the case was the report of the four jurors who heard the conversation on the corridor. (p. 16)
- However, the final evidence brought before us in this trial also reveals him to be a pathological liar and a sociopath who beats women and violates minors. (p. 16/17)

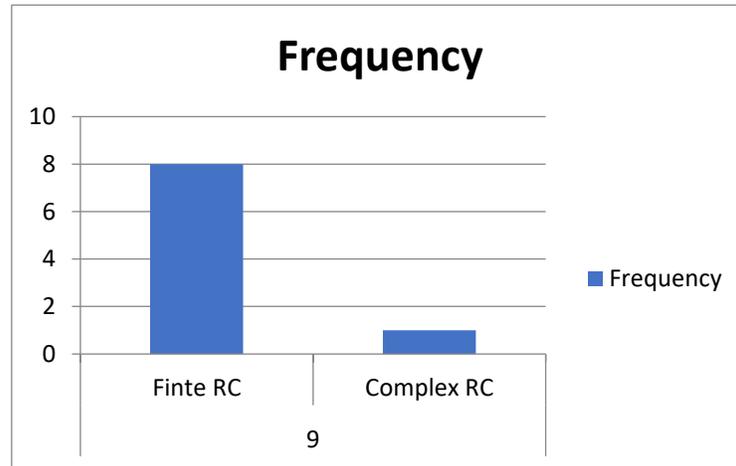


Figure 1. Frequency

From the short play *Violated*, as represented on the bar chart, eight sentences containing nine relative clauses were diagnosed. Eight of the relative clauses have been finite in nature while one was a complex relative clause which has the combination "Preposition + Relative Pronoun." All the relative clauses are not prompted by using separation markers (commas or dashes) and they are for that reason, restrictive relative clauses. The consistency in the use of the particular type of clause (restrictive) and the frequency of prevalence, in addition to the nature and shape of the relative clauses (they are now not marked off by means of separation markers) recommend a planned use via the writer of the play as part of the style within the text to make the reader not to forget the relative clauses as critical to the overall messages conveyed in the sentences and the story. The use of the relative clauses provides the reader with a clear information of the text due to the fact the use of relative clauses makes writing sophisticated and enables a writer to avoid unnecessary repetition of words and to without difficulty combine sentences rather building short or easy sentences which might not make reading interesting. The relative clauses used created intellectual images of activities and situations in the story which are a magnet for the eye of the reader to the unfolding events in the story.

CONCLUSION

Relative clauses are frequently used by writers when they want to expand their statements without starting new ones. Because they enable writers to be more specific and elevate writing to a higher level, relative clauses are extremely important. Although *Violated* has utilized them effectively and thus provides as an excellent example for learners, relative clauses are difficult for many writers and inexperienced English speakers to employ correctly.

The most common challenges in the use of relative clauses occur in the learners' understanding of the structure of relative clauses, choosing the right pronoun (or adverb), using the correct punctuation, and maintaining subject -verb agreement.

English grammar (structures), and relative clauses, in particular can be taught through literary texts, and Amaka Azuike's *Violated* is potentially a useful addition to the growing body of literature and studies on the subject of relative clauses as used in texts. The short play is especially invaluable for learners because plays are known to capture the learners' attention and motivate them towards careful reading of the text. Literary texts are a rich source of providing the grammatical items which can enrich the students and give them the opportunity to use items such as the relative clauses in a real life situation that will not only be an interesting learning field, but also to make learning memorable and easy.

Literary texts can be effectively used to teach aspects of English grammar like relative clauses. The teacher/instructor can write the sentences containing relative clauses and comment briefly on them to make the students form an idea on how to form relative clauses. Extracts or an extract from a play/novel that contains relative clause structures can be identified for discussion. The learners can be arranged into groups with the task of reading a selected text silently and underlining the relative clauses in the text. Also, learners can be instructed to divide the relative clauses in the text into their types, subject, object, possessive, and so forth.

Limitations

The tale spans through just eighteen pages and sparingly used relative clauses although it demonstrated how applicable relative clauses are in writing. If more relative clauses of various sorts were discovered, the end result may have been different from what was obtained.

Further Research

This study examined relative clauses in Amaka Azuike's *Violated* and thus gives room for further research in a comparative manner on how the writer has used relative clauses in others short stories contained in the writer's compendium. That should be done to draw up clear pedagogical implications of the use of literary texts in the teaching of English as second language.

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