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Case story and the interpretation of relative clause marker by ESL learners in some selected schools in Yaoundé

A Dissertation submitted to the Higher Teacher Training College (ENS) Yaoundé in partial Fulfilment of the requirements for the award of D.I.P.E.S II in English language

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DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my brother Derek Mpako Ngome.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

ABSTRACT

This study explores the structural configuration and interpretation of the case form of the relative clause marker by second language learners. This study is anchored on the theoretical paradigm, Case Theory (Chomsky 1981), which stipulates the theta –roles of noun phrases in relation to the verb used in a sentence. Hence case grammar is a system of linguistic analysis which focuses on the link between the subject and object of a verb and the grammatical context it requires. To accomplish the aim of this study, a production test was designed to elicit data from students of four secondary schools in Yaounde. Findings reveal that these learners of English face difficulties in interpreting the relative clause markers as they substitute the relative pronoun "which" for "who", " who" is also substituted for an object relative pronoun "whom" in some cases and in some others , the relative pronoun "that" substitutes its counterpart "whom" and "which". Hence they use the case forms of relative pronouns arbitrarily without respecting the input- oriented feature specifications spelt out by the Case Theory. This is a call for concern as this raises serious pedagogical questions with regard to the teaching and learning of English as a second language.

RESUME

Cette recherche porte sur l'analyse de la configuration structurelle et du cas du pronom relatif tel qu'utilisé par les élèves ayants l'anglais pour deuxième langue. La théorie du cas formulée par Chomsky en 1981 nous a servis de paradigme. Cette théorie examine donc le rapport du syntagme nominal avec le verbe utilisé dans une phrase. Le cas grammatical se révèle comme étant un système basé sur le rapport sujet-objet ainsi le rapport verbe-contexte grammatical dans l'analyse linguistique. Pour atteindre le but de cette étude, nous avons amené les élèves provenant de quatre établissements de Yaoundé à produire des rédactions à partir desquelles nous avons collecté nos donnés. Notre analyse révèle que ces élèves ont les difficultés à interpréter les pronoms relatifs car ils substituent « which » par « who ». « Who » est aussi remplacé par les pronoms relatifs objets « whom » et « which ». Ainsi, leur usage du pronom relatif est arbitraire car ne respectant pas les règles qui régissent l'emploi des ce pronom par la théorie du cas. Ceci soulève donc d'importantes questions pédagogiques au sujet de l'enseignement et même de l'apprentissage de l'anglais comme seconde langue.

CERTIFICATION

I certify that this research work, entitled "Case Theory and the Interpretation of Relative Clause Marker by ESL Learners in Some Selected Schools in Yaoundé" was carried out by Silvie Mekang Ngome, a student of the Department of English, Higher Teacher Training College, Yaounde.

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ABBREVIATIONS USED IN THE STUDY

ESL	English as Second language
EFL	English as a foreign language
EA	Error Analysis
GBHS	Government Bilingual High School
GBPHS	Government Bilingual Practising High School
INFL	Inflection
L1	First language
L2	Second language
NP	Noun phrase
RC	Relative clause
SLA	Second language acquisition
S, O, C, A	Subject, object, complement, adjunct
Spec	Specifier
+tns	tense
V	verb
Prep	preposition
e.g.	Example

CHAPTER ONE

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

The present study explores the structural configuration and interpretation of the case form of the relative clause marker by English as Second language (henceforth ESL) learners. The empirical focus is on the relationship between the verb in the embedded relative clause and the relative clause marker. With regard to this, the present chapter, which acts as the presentation of what the whole work is all about, handles the main issues that sustain the research: background, research problem, aim, significance of the study as well as the thesis statement, research questions and the structure of the work.

The understanding of how input and output affect comprehension and production of the target forms and structures in one's second language (henceforth L2), is a key issue in second language acquisition (henceforth SLA) research and has been the subject of several studies which try to examine the relative effects of input-based as compared to output-based instructional conditions (Nagata, 1998; Allen, 2000; Erlam, 2003). Relative clause constructions in English have been considered to be complicated and problematic for most ESL learner, compared with some other structures in the language (Celce-Muricia& Larsen – Freeman, 1999). Research in SLA has revealed that the problems with which English learners in general are confronted concern first language (henceforth L1) influence (Gass, 1984; Chen, 2004**),** avoidance (Li, 1996; Mamniruzzuman,2008), and overgeneralization (Erdogan,2005). This phenomenon characterizes the English of ESL learners because English in non-native setting exists alongside indigenous language and most people who study English here come to the English language classroom with knowledge of at least an L1. This is even more evident in the Cameroonian setting.

The Cameroonian linguistic ecology harbours a multitude of languages. It is mapped out by indigenous languages, Indo –European languages (English and French), and Hybrid languages (Pidgin English and camfranglais). Biloa (2004:1) succinctly presents a clear picture of this linguistic diversity in Cameroon thus:

> Cameroon is generally looked at as the microcosm of Africa. From a variety of
>
> perspectives, it is Africa in miniature. Historically, it is a zone of confluence and
>
> convergence of the civilization that have impacted Africa. Linguistically, three of

the four linguistic phyla attested in Africa are represented therein. To say the list, it

is linguistics melting –pot or patchwork. Apart from the local languages, there are

two languages of European importation; French and English. On top of that, two

hybrid languages: Pidgin English and camfranglais. Biloa (2004:1)

Cameroon is a multilingual country comprising of 247 indigenous languages, two official languages and Cameroon Pidgin English (Breton and Fohtung, 1991). Although Ethnologue (2002) puts the number of indigenous languages for Cameroon at 279, these figures are challenged by scholars such as Wolf (2002) for not seeing an accurate reflection of the current language situation. Some dialects of the same languages are sometimes considered as different languages, Echu (2003).

The two official languages, French and English came into the Cameroon linguistic scene in 1906 when Britain and France divided the country into two unequal parts. These colonial masters imposed the languages in the newly acquired territory, both in areas of administration and education. This situation was reinforced after Cameroon became independent and at reunification in 1961, when English and French become the official languages of Cameroon as the country opted for the policy of official languages bilingualism. (Echu 2003). This also bred two sub-systems, and the French sub-systems. In the English sub-system, the English language is the medium of instruction and learners of English here are considered as ESL learners. In the French sub-system, the French language is the medium of instruction and learners of English here are considered as EFL learners.

With this background, L2 learners of English in Cameroon have a difficult puzzle in striving to set the parameters of the English language. Because the rhetorical structures of these languages surrounding the acquisition of English in this setting are not the same as that of English, the structural configuration of what is written in this setting often exhibit features that do not meet input-based features specifications. However, language learners need to posses an intuitive ability required to identify certain grammatical elements in a sentence and structural configuration. Research has shown that many students as well as teachers face a lot of difficulties in identifying the subject and object of the verbs in complex sentences. This is noticeable mostly in complex sentences with relative clause.

A relative clause modifies a noun or a noun phrase. They are often introduced by relative pronouns such as, who, whom, which, and that. A relative clause gives extra information about the noun in the matrix clauses (e.g. the book which I am reading comes from the bookshop). In this example, the relative clause marker is the relative pronoun "which". This relative clause marker introduces the relative clause "which I am reading". The latter provides addition information to the noun phrase "the book". A syntactic analysis of the embedded relative clause reveals that the relative clause marker "which "is the object of the verb "reading". Thus, this is the object of the verb. A detailed discussion of this phenomenon is done in the next chapter.

Besides , in order to better interpret the position of the relative clause markers as either playing the role of a subject or object of a verb in the embedded clause, it is very important to take the case theory as the theoretical paradigm that underlie the study. Case is a morph-syntactic property of noun phrases, which identifies a noun phrase's function or grammatical relation in a sentence. This theory analyses the surface syntactic structure of sentences by studying the combination of deep cases which have semantic roles such as agents, objects, benefactor, location or instrument which are required by a specific verb. Take for instance the verb "to give" in English requires an *Agent* (A), *an Object* (O), and *a Beneficiary* (B) as in "Susan (A) gave groundnuts (o) to the farmers (B)".

Consequently, in view of the foregoing discussion, the present study aims to explore and analyse how L2 learners in some selected schools in Yaounde interpret the relative clause marker of the embedded relative clause, in a complex sentence, in relation to the verb in the embedded clause. The study is limited to relative pronouns and to upper sixth arts students of A1, A3, and A5 series.

In order to carry out an in-depth investigation into this phenomenon, the following research questions underlie the study:

1. How do Upper Sixth Arts students interpret the semantic role of relative clause markers in complex sentence?
2. What are the difficulties noticed in the Upper Sixth arts students processing of the semantic role of the relative clause markers in English?

The outcome of the study is expected to be of benefit to learners, teachers and the educational authorities in various ways. This study is an appropriate pedagogical material in the teaching of English to ESL learners. This is because it provides a rationale for constructing language lessons in ESL context which are more appealing to this set of students, taking into consideration the syntactic configuration that will develop learner's competency and autonomy. The findings will inspire teachers to improve on their competence and adopt new and better approaches to teaching relative pronouns and adverbs. In the same light, it is of help to students in highlighting the features that will enable them to become efficient in using relative pronouns. Moreover, it is going to create awareness in English language teachers of the need to raise the consciousness of learners' semantic role of the relative pronouns and adverbs.

This study is divided into five chapters. Chapter One, which act as the presentation of what the whole work is all about, handles the main issues that sustain the research: background, research problem, aims, scope, significance of the study as well as the thesis statement, research questions and the structure of the work. Chapter Two presents and discusses the theoretical paradigm, the case theory (Chomsky 1981), and reviews related literature. Chapter Three presents the methodology for this research. This chapter describes research instruments, sample population, procedure of data collection and the method of data analysis. Chapter Four presents and analysis the data collected. Chapter Five presents the summary of the findings, gives the pedagogical relevance and makes recommendations.

CHAPTER TWO

THEORETICAL PREMISE AND REVIEW OF LITERATURE

2.0 Introduction

This chapter is focused on the theoretical paradigm (2.1) and review of related literature (2.2).

2.1Theoretical Premise

The theoretical framework adopted from Chomsky is the Case Theory (Chomsky 1981). This theory stipulates a morph syntactic property of noun phrases which identifies a noun phrase's function or grammatical relation in a sentence. Hence, it analyses the surface syntactic structure of sentences by studying the combination of deep cases which have semantic roles such as agents, objects, benefactor location or instrument which are required by a specific verb. Case is assigned by means of feature checking in a spec- head configuration and is morphologically visible. Therefore, it deals with a special property that all noun phrases are assumed to have. If they lack this feature, the sentence which contains the phrase is rendered ungrammatical. In English there are generally three main cases: nominative Scase, accusative case, and genitive case. The nominative case is a linguistic situation whereby a noun is the subject of a clause as in "Coffee is good". In this sentence, the noun "coffee" which is the subject of the verb "is" is in the nominative case. Besides, the accusative case is a linguistic situation whereby the noun in a clause is the object of the verb as in "I like coffee". In this clause, the noun "coffee" which is the object of the verb "like" is in the accusative case. In the same line of thought, the genitive case expresses possession as in (John's book).

2.1.1 Case theory

According to Chomsky (1981), Case grammar is a system of linguistic analysis which focuses on the link between the number of subjects and objects of a verb and the grammatical context it requires. In the context of transformational grammar, the theory analyses the surface syntactic structure of sentences by studying the combination of deep cases; that is, semantic or theta roles such as: agent, object, benefactor, location or instrument, which a specific verb may require. For instance the verb' give' in English requires three theta roles: an agent (A), an object (O) and a beneficiary (B) as illustrated below

1) **<u>Susan gave <u>mangoes</u> to <u>the children</u>.</u>**

AGENT   OBJECT   BENEFICIARY

In this example, the noun "Susan" is the Agent of the verb "give", the noun "Mangoes" is the object of the verb "gave" and the noun "children" is the beneficiary of the action of giving. Hence, Case Theory enables a clause to result in the surface-structure (S-structure) order. This can be perceived by the fact that all NPs are assigned cases which are based on government or specifier-head agreement (Chomsky, 1986b:24). As a result, case is assigned by a set of case assigners (v, prep, and INFL (+tns)) to the constituent they govern. For instance, INFL (+tns) assigns nominative case to the NP it governs (i.e., the subject, reflecting the fact that tensed sentences require subject expressions); v assigns accusative case to the NP it governs (i.e., the object) and prep also assigns accusative case to the NP it governs. The nominative and the accusative cases are known in syntactic literature as external and internal arguments respectively as illustrated by the example below.

2) **Paul washed himself.**

In the above example, the verb "wash" assigns two theta roles**: Agent** (Paul) and **Patient** (himself). The AGENT is the external argument and the PATIENT is the internal argument. Hence, in a case whereby the NP is an internal argument of a verb, the verb assigns an accusative case to it and when it is the external argument of the verb, the verb assigns a nominative case to it. With regard to this, *Paul* is assigned the nominative case by the verb *wash* and *himself* is assigned the accusative case by the same verb "wash". Consequently, *Paul* is referred to as the nominative case while *himself* is the accusative case.

In addition, Fillmore (1968) defines case grammar theory as a semantic valence theory that describes the logical form of a sentence in terms of a predicate and a series of case labeled arguments such as Agent(A), Instrumental(I), Dative(D), Objective(O), Factive (F) and Locative(L). The theory provides a language universal approach to sentence semantics as well as a semantic description of the verbs of a language. According to Fillmore (ibid), each verb selects a certain number of deep cases which form its case frame. Consequently, the case frame describes a number of aspects of semantic valence of verbs and nouns as exemplified below.

   i.   The AGENTIVE (A): the instigator of the action identified by the verb. It must always be chosen as a subject in simple active sentences.

     3) **Peter** broke the window.

   ii.   INSTRUMENTAL (I): the object casually involved in the state or action identified by the verb. It may occur as the subject of the verb.

     4) **The hammer** broke the plates.

     5) John killed the Monkey with **a knife**

   iii.   DATIVE: the entity being affected by the action of the verb

     6) **Samuel** believed the story.

   iv.   OBJECTIVE: the case of anything represented by a noun whose role in the action identified by the verb is defined by the semantic interpretation of the verb itself
     7) **The story** is true

   v.   FACTIVE**:** an object resulting in a state identified by the verb
     8) Jason built **a chair**.

   vi.   LOCATIVE: the case which identifies the location identified by the verb
     9) The box contains the toys.

According to (Cook 1989:8), the case system should consist of the smallest possible number of cases that is satisfactory for the classification of all verbs of a language. Furthermore the case system should have universal character meaning that it is applicable in every language.

2.1.2 The Theta –role

This theory is a constraint on the X-bar Theory (Chomsky, 1981) as a rule within the system of the Government and Binding Theory. The theta-theory is concerned with the distribution and assignment of theta-roles. A theta-role is a status of thematic relation (Chomsky 1981:35). In order words, it describes the connection of meaning between a predicate and a verb a constituent which is selected by this predicate. The selection of a constituent by a head which is based on meaning is called s-selection (semantic-selection) and those based on grammatical categories are known as the c-selection.

10) a. Paul loves Deborah.

AGENT   THEME

b. The teacher hit Dora

In (10), the verb 'love' has two theta-roles to assign: agent (the entity who loves) and the theme (the entity being loved). In accordance with the theta-criterion, each theta-role needs its argument counterpart. The two arguments *Paul* and *Deborah* in (10a) and *teacher* and *Dora* in (10b) occupy different semantics relationships with their verbs respectively. The argument NP *Paul* in the subject position refers to the entity that is the subject of the verb *loving* and *the teacher* of *hitting*. The NP *Deborah* in (10a) expresses the entity that is loved, that is, the theme; and Dora, in (10b), the direct object of the NP expresses the entity that is hit. In this case, it is referred to as the patient. Hence, the theta role that is assigned by the verb to their NPs involved in the activity is summarized as follows:

i.   Agent (a participant that causes something to happen or is responsible for something happening or has a conscious control over something happening);
ii.   Patient/Experience(someone who experiences the action denoted by the verb);
iii.   Goal (entity towards which an activity expressed by the verb is directed),
iv.   Source (entity from which something is moved as a result of the activity expressed by the verb);
v.   Location(it marks the stationary position of an object with respect to some other object);
vi.   Theme (an object that is in steady motion or it is the topic of discussion).

Fillmore (1968: 16)

To expatiate the above-stated facts, the verb 'fear' assigns two roles: patient/theme roles (e.g., The mouse fears the cat);*give* assigns three roles: agent, patient and goal (e.g., Molly gave the keys to her sister); *see* assigns three roles: experience, theme, and location (e.g., Clovis saw a beetle on the table); *borrow* assigns three roles: agent, theme and source (e.g., John borrowed a car from Dora).As demonstrated above, the predicate takes relevant information from the lexicon and assigns a theta role to each of its syntactic arguments. As a result, it can be said that theta theory examines how lexical items behave in relationship with other lexical items. (Epoge 2011).

2.1.3 Theta criterion

According to Chomsky quoted in Epoge (2011), the theta criterion states that each argument of the verb receives one and only one theta role and each theta role is assigned to one and only one argument. The theta criterion makes sure that a verb is associated with just the right theta role. For instance, the verb *catch* is linked with an agent as subject (catcher) and a patient as object (the caught). Thus the theta criterion ensures that the verb *catch o*ccurs with two lexical NPs and that *agent* and *patient* are assigned correctly to its subject and object (Epoge 2011). This is because when there is a one-to- one mapping of argument to theta – role, the theta criterion is satisfied and the sentence is deemed grammatical(Carnie 2007:225).

In the case of a relative clause construction, the relative pronoun "who" has two case forms to spell out the external argument and the internal argument respectively. The external argument (the nominative case) has the form "who" and the internal argument (accusative case) has the form "whom" as illustrated below.

11) a. This is the man who teaches English.

b. This is the man whom we visited yesterday.

In (11a) the relative pronoun "who" is the subject of the verb "teaches' and in (11b) the relative pronoun "whom" is the object of the verb "visited". Hence, in (11a) the relative pronoun is an external argument and in (11b) it is an internal argument. In the same vein, the relative pronoun in (11a) is the AGENT and in (11b) the BENEFICIARY.

It is healthy to point out here that not all relative pronouns have two distinct case forms. This is the case of the relative pronoun 'which'. This relative pronoun has the same case form for both the external and internal argument as illustrated below.

12) a. This is the book which carries the effigy of the Head of State.

b. This is the book which I bought yesterday.

In (12a), the relative pronoun "which" is the subject of the verb "carries" and in (11b) it is the object of the verb "bought". Hence, the external argument and the internal argument, have the

same case form. Consequently, the distinction of the nominative and accusative cases is not spelt out at the orthographic level. This is only possible through a syntactic analysis.

It is healthy to point out here that English follows the normative grammatical tradition which associates the subjective pronouns with the nominative case of pronouns in inflectional languages such as Latin and objective case with the oblique cases (especially accusative and dative cases) in such languages (Quirk et al 1985).Thus, Case Theory is adopted for this study to check how the input-oriented feature specifications are interpreted by English as Second language (ESL) learners in some selected schools in Yaoundé.

2.2 Review of Related Literature

The review of related literature is done in two phases: the notion of relative pronouns and clauses (2.2.1) and related empirical studies (2.2.2

2.2.1 The Notion of Relative Pronouns and Clauses

A relative pronoun introduces a relative clause (Quirk et al 1995). The question that arises here is what is then a clause? Task and Stockwell (2007), cited in Epoge (2015pg 81-82), holds that

> A clause is a grammatical unit consisting of a subject and a predicate, and every sentence must consist of one or more clauses. For example, a simple sentence consists only of a single clause (e.g., Mary has gone to school). A compound sentence consist of two or more clauses of equal rank usually joined by a coordinating conjunction such as and, or, but, yet, so (e.g., the students went to school but the teacher did not come). Then a complex sentence consists of two or more clauses where one out ranks the others which are subordinated to it (e.g., If the rain continues, the wheat will rot).

In English syntax, a relative clause is a certain type of sub-clause, at least containing a subject and a verb that is used to modify nouns, pronouns or sometimes whole phrases. Relative clauses are usually introduced by a relative pronoun establishing a link to what is being modified (which is called the 'antecedent'). This assertion is illustrated by the example below.

12) The handbag which you ordered last month has arrived.

In (12) above, the relative pronoun "*which*" introduces the relative clause "*which you ordered last month*". A relative pronoun is different from a personal pronoun in that the element which comprises or contains the relative pronoun is always placed at the beginning of the clause, whether it is subject, complement or object. Also, relative pronouns resemble personal pronouns in that they have co reference to an antecedent (Quirk et al 1995). For instance, the antecedent of the relative pronoun *which* in (12) is *handbag*. In this case, as in most relative clauses, the antecedent is the preceding part of the noun phrase in which the relative clause functions as post modifier: [the handbag [which you ordered last month]]. Hence, a "relative clause is a clause which modifies the head of a noun phrase and typically includes a pronoun or other elements whose reference is linked to it" (Mathews 2007:341). It is introduced by a relative pronoun who, whom, which, that or whose or by a relative adverb where, when or why.

It is healthy to point out here that there are two types of relative clauses: defining and non-defining. Defining relative clause (also called identifying relative clauses or restrictive relative clauses) gives detailed information defining a general term or expression. Defining relative clauses are not put in comma. Defining relative clauses are often used in definitions as in the sentence "A seaman is someone who works in a ship". In this sentence, the relative clause "who works in a ship" defines the antecedent "a seaman". So, the function of the defining relative clause is to give essential information about the antecedent.

Non-defining relative clauses (also called non-identifying relative clauses or non-restrictive relative clauses) give additional information on something but do not define it. Non-defining relative clauses are put in commas. In the sentence " My father, who is in the corner, is a judge", the relative clause is a non-defining one because it gives extra information about the antecedent "my father". The relative clause is put in commas because it gives extra information and it can be deleted without changing the meaning. And the new sentence will be "My father is a judge".

Either defining or non-defining relative clause, the latter is introduced by a relative pronoun. A relative pronoun is a pronoun that marks a relative clause within a larger sentence. It is called a "relative" pronoun because it "relates" to the word that it modifies as in the following example:

13) The person who phoned me yesterday is my brother.

In the above example, "who" relates to "person", which it modifies and introduces the relative clause "who phoned me yesterday". Hence, a relative pronoun is a type of pronoun which introduces a relative clause in a sentence to qualify a preceding noun called the antecedent.

14) The pastor whom Paul was expecting has died.

In the above example the antecedent of *whom* is *the pastor*. The antecedent is vital because it determines which relative pronoun is to be used. In a case where the antecedent has one or more persons, these relative pronouns who, whom, or whose are employed. These relative pronouns fall under three main case forms: nominative, accusative, and genitive respectively. The nominative case *who* is used when a person is the subject of the verb.

15) The trader who sells toys is an illiterate.

In the above example, the relative pronoun *who* is the subject of the verb *sells* and its antecedent is the NP, *the trader*. The accusative case form whom is employed when it is the object of a verb or a preposition

16) Paul is a prophet whom everyone worships.

17) This is the man to whom the money was paid.

In (16) the relative pronoun *whom* is the direct of the verb *worships* and its antecedent is the NP *prophet*. Genitive case (expressing ownership) pronoun *whose*, relates possession. It denotes possessor as (18) exemplifies..

18) Children whose parents are poor are intelligent.

In addition, the relative pronoun *which* is employed, when either the subject or object of the verb is a thing or an animal as illustrated in (19)

19) a. The tomatoes which I bought yesterday are rotten.

b. Christina took the bag which was on the table.

In (19a), the relative pronoun *which* is the direct object of the verb "bought", and its antecedent is the NP *tomatoes.* In (19b) the relative pronoun *which* is the subject of the verb "was" and its antecedent is the NP *bag.*

It is important to point out here that, unlike personal pronouns, relative pronouns have the double role of referring to the antecedent which determines gender selection (e.g., who/which) and of functioning as all of, or part of, an element in the relative clause which determines the case form for those items that have case distinction (e.g., who/whom). Hence, Quirk et al (1995:1245) holds that;

> Part of the explicitness of relative clauses lies in the specifying power of the relative
>
> pronoun. It may be capable of (i) showing concord with its antecedent, that is, the
>
> preceding part of the noun phrase of which the relative clause is a post modifier
>
> [external relation]; and (ii) indicating its function within the relative clause either as
>
> an element of clause structure (S, O, C, A), or as a constituent of an element in the
>
> relative clause (internal relation)

In view of the above-stated, the focus of the present study is on the internal relation.

An English relative pronoun represents the antecedent within the relative clause, usually in the position they would have in a corresponding declarative clause. They point out or reinforce the grammatical function of the relativised NP in the relative clause by case – marking and position and they strengthen the co-reference relation between the relativsed NP and the antecedent by agreement in gender and number. Relative pronouns in English behave differently from relative clauses in other languages. According to Mckee and McDaniel (2001), relative pronoun distribution is very limited and appears to be influenced by linear distance, depth and especially extractability that is, whether a trace is acceptable. In English relative clauses, relative pronoun is generally in complementary distribution with traces in (41) , where the trace is possible, the relative pronoun is not: in (42), where the trace is not possible , the relative pronoun is not: in (42), where the trace is not possible , the relative pronoun is.

(41)a). That's the girl that I like t_i

b). That's the girl that I like her.

(42) a) That's the girl that I don't know what $_t$did.

   b.) That's the girl that I don't know what she did.

(Adapted from Mckee and McDaniel, 2001)

Many linguists have contributed significantly to the literature of relative clause acquisition. The aspects they have explored concern whether there is a universal markedness relationship. Besides, transfer issue is also taken into account in the acquisition process (Odlin 1989) at the same time; psycholinguistic factors are also considered in determining the order of relative acquisition.

Gass (1979) investigated the acquisition of English relative clause by adult L2 learners of a variety of linguistic backgrounds with the attempt to determine the relationship between transfer and universal factors in the second language acquisition (SLA). The native learners were learners of French and Arabic. Data from seventeen high- intermediate and advanced learners were tested by sentence combination and free composition task. The results indicate the acquisition of relative clauses by adult L2 learners was primarily governed by universal phenomena. The easiest position to relativise being subject position. However, genitive was the exception. Gass provided two possible explanations for this. First, genitive is uniquely restricted to "whose", allowing no other markers. Second, the relative ease of genitive has to do with its position. In the sentence like "the man whose daughter John loves went to China". "Whose daughter" is viewed as a unit and interpreted as a direct object of the verb" loves", which accounts for the ease of relativisation of genitive case. This study also showed universal principle is indispensable in the understanding and interpretation of second language data. In the same vein, Izumi (2003) tested three hypotheses of relative clause acquisition on subjects of various backgrounds. It was found out that the overall order of difficulty can be predicted by the matrix positioning with the matrix object position being easier than the matrix position. The difficult order can be predicted by the relative clause types as in Noun Phrase Accessibility Hierarchy (NPAH). He came to the conclusion that NPAH based on different rationales can be seen to be complementary to each other since

NPAH is associated to the effect of canonicity with relative clause is related to the notion of processing interruption in the matrix sentence.

According to Chomsky (1986), English relative clause is an embedded clause, which is contained inside the NP it modified. English relative clause involves the movement of Wh-relative pronoun or empty relative pronoun to the specifier position of complement phrase in the embedded clause. This movement leaves a trace in the position from which the wh-phrase has moved. Hence the moved wh-phrase is an operator which binds the trace it leaves behind. In English wh-operator can be either overt such as who, which, that, whom or null when they are overt. The head complimentizer must be null (except subject relative clause) as in (35) when the wh operator is null, the complementizers may be either that or null, as in (36). In English relative clause, relative pronouns should co –exit with wh- movement, otherwise ungrammaticality will occur.

(35) a. the girl$_i$ [CP$_e$[I like wh] $_i$] is here.

b. the girl i[cp who$_{i\ e}$ [I like t $_i$]]is here.

(36) a. the girl $_i$ [OP$_i$ that [I like t $_i$]] is here

b. the girl $_i$[OP$_{ie}$ [I like t $_i$]] is here.

Since wh movement is restricted by subjacencey principle under which a constituent can only be moved over a single bounding category (S or NP in English), in other words, movement should not take place beyond more than one bounding category (S or NP in English) in other words movement should not take place beyond more than one boundary node. And in English, NP and TP are bounding nodes. If wh-movement in RCS violates subjecency principle, relative will occur as examples in (37) and (38).

(37) [NP this is the man [CP who (m) [TPEmesworth told me when [TP he will invite him.]]]].

(38) [NP this is the man [CP who (m) [TP Emsworth made [NP the claim that [TP he will invite him]]]]].

(Adapted from Haegeman, 1991).

2.2.2 Related Empirical Studies

Relative clause constructions in English have been considered to be complicated and problematic for most EFL and ESL learners, compared with some other structures in the language (Celce-Murcia & Larsen-Freeman, 1999). Research in second language acquisition has revealed that the problems with which English learners in general are confronted concern first language (L1) influence (e.g. Gass, 1984; Chang, 2004; Chen, 2004), avoidance (e.g. Chiang, 1980; Gass, 1980; Li, 1996; Maniruzzuman, 2008), and overgeneralization (e.g. Selinker, 1992; Erdogan, 2005).

Learners of a second language are likely to rely on the knowledge of their mother tongue when faced with certain kinds of problems in second language learning or communication. That is, they transfer the forms and meanings from L1 to the production and comprehension in the target language. Such reliance upon learners' first language sometimes appear to make them successful in L2 acquisition, thus viewed as facilitation. Nevertheless, it is often shown that influence from L1 knowledge can also have a negative effect on L2 learning, where the distance between L1 and L2 is great. With respect to L2 acquisition of English relative clauses, evidence of both positive and negative transfer is outstanding (Gass, 1984; Chang, 2004; Chen, 2004).

Avoidance, like L1 transfer, seems to play an important role in second language acquisition of relative clauses. According to Ellis (1994), learners avoid using linguistic structures which they consider difficult due to differences between their native language and the target language. While first language transfer causes them to produce errors in L2, avoidance behavior leads them to an omission of the L2 construction the use of which they are not completely certain about. One of the classic studies as to avoidance in L2 RC production is Schachter (1974), which revealed some flaws of error analysis (EA) as this approach of L2 study failed to account for the occurrence of avoidance. To be specific, she focused her study on the use of English relative clauses by native speakers of four different languages (Persian, Arabic, Chinese, and Japanese) in comparison with the English relative clauses used by American English speakers. It is discovered that the Chinese and Japanese speakers produced fewer errors on English relative clauses than did the Persian and Arabic participants because they avoided using English relative clauses which are right-branching. Gass (1980), using a sentence-combining task and a written composition, found that avoidance of L2 relative clauses is related to the degree of markedness in

that more marked relative clause types have more likelihood to be avoided. Gass demonstrated that L2 English learners in the first task appeared to avoid relative clause structures which are more marked, such as the object-of-preposition relative as in "He has a book which I am interested in".Maniruzzaman (2008) investigated Bengali EFL learners' avoidance behavior. More than 90 % of the participants admitted in the questionnaire and the interviews that they adopted avoidance behavior on purpose in their learning and using English. Put differently, the learners avoided producing some complex English structures, e.g. relative clauses, in both speaking and writing. A great number of learners attributed their avoidance to the dissimilarities between L1 and L2, and to the difficulty of L2 structures.

Another feature identified in EFL learners' use of English relative clauses deals with transfer of training. This occurs when L2 learners apply rules they have previously learned from their teachers or textbooks (Selinker, 1992). Unfortunately, if such instruction or textbooks place an emphasis on only some structures of a grammar point, at the expense of the others, learners may develop, in a limited manner, the knowledge of that grammar point in L2 and overproduce only what they have learned or are used to, not aware of the other constructions which are more advanced. To make it worse, in case the past training or textbooks contain wrong information on that L2 grammar point, learners are inclined to incorrectly use such structures having been taught (Ellis, 1985, 1994).

Overgeneralization is another common process used by those acquiring their native language as well as learners of L2 (Gass and Selinker, 2001; Selinker, 1992). As regards L2 acquisition, according to Richards et al. (2002), overgeneralization is a process in which a learner extends the use of a grammatical rule of linguistic item beyond its acceptable uses in the target language. This phenomenon occurs when learners try to formulate a linguistic rule, based on the language data they have been exposed to or instructed, without being aware of exceptions. As far as L2 relative clause acquisition is concerned, English learners face challenges with the differences between a restrictive relative clause (My sister who lives in Chicago has two children), and a non-restrictive relative clause (My sister, who lives in Chicago, has two children) (Celce-Murcia and Larsen-Freeman, 1999). On the other side of the spectrum, Akiko (2011) examines the relationship that exists between sentence processing and individual differences in working memory capacity. The question he addresses is whether the performances of second language (L2) in

processing relative clauses are similar to those of native speakers depending on one's working memory. His findings reveal that having a lower working memory capacity seems to hinder processing a sentence in a way similar to the native speakers. Hence, he argues that the inability of the L2 learners to produce L2 sentences in the manner that is commonly preferred by the native speakers seems to lead to lower comprehension accuracy in the relative clause sentences, especially in the more-difficult-to-comprehend English object-gap. In the same vein, Epoge (2015) investigated second language learners of English in Cameroon processing and processing strategies of both the subject and object noun phrases (NP), in sentences with embedded relative clause, in order to assign the correct meaning to the sentence. He collected data from university students who performed a sentence comprehension task consisting of subject- subject, object- subject, subject - object and object- object. His findings reveal that processing difficulties can be linked with the poor mastery of clausal elements, as well as the non-linguistic factors such as working memory limitations.

Also, Mere Bakkal (2010) investigated the techniques of relative clauses to Turkish speakers. Relative clauses have always been an important issue to the EFL/ESL learners of their complex syntactic structure and therefore being a learning problem to the language learner. He collected data and his findings reveal that the informants' use of "which" instead of "whose "in genitive construction is problematic to Turkish learners. Deletion of the subject pronoun which results in ungrammatical sentence is an additional difficulty. Likewise, Theres Wikefiord (2014) carried a research on "relative pronouns, relative clauses". One of the aims of this study is to explore Swedish learner's choice and usage of relative pronouns in English. One of the hypotheses that underlie the study was that zero construction rarely utilized. The results indicate that the constraint on relative pronouns choice is non-restrictive clause is difficult for many learners adhere to in writing. Another line of research focused on the effects of the instruction on relative clause acquisition for L2 learners. Aarts & Schils (1995) compared the production of Dutch learners of English on sentence –combing tasks done before and after three lectures on relative clauses, observed significant effects of instruction on learner's performance of relative clauses. While several studies have been conducted to examine Chinese and English relative clauses contrastively, research concerning how the differences between Chinese and English relativisation affect the acquisition of Chinese learners of English is scant among the limited amount of studies examining Chinese learner's relative clauses. For example Schechter (1974) examined the composition data written by Persian, Arabic, Chinese and Japanese learners of English. She observed that Chinese and

Japanese groups produced significantly fewer relative clauses than did Persian and Arabic groups. She explained that it is because the native language from relative clauses strikingly different ways. She also noted that while Chinese and Japanese do not use relative clauses with great frequency, they use them with a high degree of accuracy when they do use them. In the same vein, Liu (1998) investigated English relative clauses produced by junior high school students in Taiwan. The author collected data using picture- identification (PID), ordering (OR) and grammaticality judgment (GJ) tasks and observed little L1 interference in the process of second / foreign language acquisition. On the other hand, Chiang (1981) examined the errors in English majors writing and found that interference from L1 is a common but not major, source error. The results show that subjects misuse relative pronoun, such as the use of *that* for *where,* or vice versa.

With regard to the fore-going discussion, the present study is similar to the previous studies in that they are all centered on complex sentences with relative clauses. Focus is on relative clauses and/or relative pronouns. However, the study differs from the previous studies in many perspectives. It centers on the interpretation of relative clause markers byESL learners of English in a multilingual context. It equally focuses on ESL learners who have been exposed to the English language since primary school and have been studying English language for more than twelve years (i.e. six years in primary school and seven years in secondary school). In addition, this study looks into the semantic property of the relative clause marker in complex sentences with relative clauses, the property which none of the previous has examined.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter is concerned with the description of the methodology adopted for the present study. It presents and describes the area of study (3.1), population of study (3.2), instrument of data collection (3.3), procedure of data collection (3.4) and method of data analysis (3.5).

3.1 Area of study

This work was carried out in Yaounde, the headquarters of the Centre Region of the Republic of Cameroon. It was conducted specifically in four schools in Yaoundé: Government Bilingual High School Essos, Government Bilingual Practicing High School Yaounde, Government Bilingual High School Etoug-ebe Yaounde and English High School Yaounde. These schools were chosen first because they are secondary high schools and the students come from different linguistic backgrounds. Also, it was thought worthy to take schools from different denominations: government and private as cited above. In addition, since the focus of the present study was on learners of English as a second language, these schools were chosen to meet the exigencies of the study.

3.2 Population of study

The respondents for this study involved Upper Sixth Arts Student of the four schools. This population was chosen because English Language is one of their main subjects both in class and in their official examinations and it is believed that these students have been studying the language for a period of about fourteen years: seven years in the primary school, five years in the First Cycle and two years in the Second Cycle. On a whole, 80 students took part in the test. The table below records the population of study.

Table1:Thedistribution of the population of study

SCHOOL	NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS
GBHS Essos	20
GBPHS Yaounde	20
GBHS Etoug-ebe	20
EHS Yaounde	20
TOTAL	**80**

As can be seen in the table above, 20 respondents were randomly selected from each school and, when the number of respondents was tallied, it came up to 80 respondents who participated in the production test.

These respondents were chosen because they have been exposed to the English language in the classroom for at least 14 years (i.e. seven years in Primary School and seven years in Secondary/high school). It is worthy of note that these respondents come to the English language classroom with a knowledge of their mother tongues, French and Camfranglais. However, these respondents prefer speaking French and more often than not English language in a formal setting.

3.2. Instrument of data collection

The instrument used in the collection of data was a Production Test. This production test was conceived to assess respondents' knowledge of relative clause markers, and how often they use it in their writings taking into consideration the notions of case. The test which comprised of 05 questions or items was made up of two tasks: the Multiple Choice Comprehension Task (MCCT) and the Essay task. The MCCT task required respondents to explicitly identify the relative clause marker in the relative clause construction provided as either functioning as the subject or object of the verb given. This was done to find out the function of the relative pronouns to which the respondents analyzed. The respondents were asked to identify the relative pronouns in the construction by ticking against the right alternative. Sample tokens of the MCCT question are given below.

1. The book which I bought yesterday is interesting.
    a) "which" is the subject of the verb "bought"   Yes [ ]   No[ ]
    b) "which" is the object of the verb "bought"   Yes [ ]   No[ ]
    c) "which" is neither the subject nor the object of the verb "bought"   Yes[ ] No[ ]
2. This is the police who arrested the thief.
    a) "who" is the subject of the verb "arrested"   Yes[ ]   No[ ]
    b) "who" is the object of the verb "arrested"   Yes[ ]   No[ ]
    c) "who" is neither the subject nor the object of the verb "arrested"   Yes[ ] No[ ]

With regard to the essay task, an essay topic was given on which the respondents were expected to write freely. The respondents were expected to write an essay of not more than 150 words on the topic "An accident you witnessed in your neighbourhood". The various tasks were structured in such a way as to meet the exigencies related to the interpretation of the relative clause markers as either the object or subject of the verb in the relative clause. They test lasted one hour.

3.3. Procedure of data collection

The production test was drafted and presented to the supervisor for correction and endorsement. After cross-checking and adoption of the production test, the researcher set out for field investigation. This test, just as the scope stipulates, was destined for Upper Sixth students in four different schools in Yaounde. The choice of these classes was simply as a result of their exposure to the English Language. The teachers of the various schools were of great help in the collection of the data. The permission was sought from the school authorities and from the teachers teaching English in each of the classes randomly selected to administer the test. Each teacher voluntarily gave up his or her hour to enable me to administer the production test even though they had the pressure to finish their syllabus in view of the forthcoming GCE Advanced-Level examination.

The teachers had to inform their learners some days before the test was administered. During the administration of the test, the researcher was accompanied and assisted by the teacher teaching the class to ensure that the students take the exercise seriously. The production test was administered to the respondents as a class test. All the written instructions were in English. The teachers were cooperative and rendered help such as the distribution of the test papers to respondents, invigilation and collection of the test papers at the end of the

test. All the learners present in each of the classes at the time of administration wrote the test and all the scripts from all these classes were collected and marked. The number of scripts from the four schools was classified and analyzed making a total of 80 scripts treated.

3.4. Method of data analysis

The data acquired was marked, analyzed and any response that respected the input-oriented semantic role of the relative clause marker got a point and any other got no point. The responses which respected the input-oriented feature specifications were identified and classified. This brought about the establishment of five tables which record the number of instances produced in setting the input-oriented feature specifications and the percentage scored, as well as the number of instances that do not respect the input-oriented feature specifications. To make the result more feasible, the percentage scored was captured on mean percentage graph.

In order to obtain these percentages, the following formula was used:

$Y\% = X/N \times 100/1$, where

X= number of students who gave the same response to a question

Y = percentage gotten from the sum of number of answers

N= the total number of instances provided

All these tables as well as the graphs were analysed discussed and explained bringing out the salient points. Furthermore, feature specifications, in the data provided, were identified and categorized. They were accompanied by explanations and examples to illustrate the point made.

As far as the essay component was concerned, the essence was to see the extent to which, even in their free speech, respondents violated the semantic role of relative clause markers.

3.5. Conclusion

This chapter handled the methodology adopted for this study. This chapter presented the sample population, the instrument of data collection, the procedure of data collection and the method of data analysis. From every indication, data collected for the present research was done in a scientific way and the analysis go in the same light as far as scientificity is concerned, leaving no room for subjectivity.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS AND PRESENTATION OF RESULTS

4.0. Introduction

This chapter presents and analyses the data collected. The analysis is based on the respect and non-respect of the input-oriented feature specifications as far as the semantic role of relative clause markers is concerned.

4.1 Respondents' general performance in the interpretation of the semantic role of the relative clause marker

 The relative pronoun, when it is found in a sentence, can either play the role of a subject of the verb or the object of the verb. Hence, respondents were expected to identify the role played by each of the relative pronouns in the sentences which were given in the production test. Structures such as "The book which I bought yesterday is interesting" were used to illicit data. The result of their performance is presented in the table below.

Table 2: Respondents' general performance in the interpretation of the semantic role of the relative clause marker

SCHOOL	SETTING INPUT PARAMETER		NON-SETTING OF INPUT PARAMETER		TOTAL
	Number of instances	%	Number of instances	%	
GBPHS Yaounde	119	49.6	121	50.4	240
GBHS Essos	100	41.7	140	58.3	240
GBHS Etoug-ebe	119	47.5	121	50.4	240
EHS Yaounde	84	35	156	65	240
TOTAL	**422**	**44**	**538**	**56**	**960**

The result in the table above portrays that respondents produced 422 (44%) instances whereby they respected the parameter settings of the input-oriented feature specifications with regard to the interpretation of the semantic role of the relative pronouns tested. They equally produced 538 (56%) instances whereby they used other parameter settings which violate the feature specifications of the input.

As concerns the different institutions, the respondents from Government Bilingual Practicing High School Yaounde produced 119 (49.6%) instances whereby they set the input feature specifications in the interpretation of the semantic role of the pronouns in question; and 121 (50.4%) instances whereby they violated the input feature specifications. The respondents in Government Bilingual High School Essos produced 100 (41.7%) instances whereby they respected the input feature specifications and 140 (58.3%) instances wherein they violated the semantic role input feature specifications. The respondents from Government Bilingual High School Etoug-Ebe produced 119 (49.6%) instances whereby they set the input feature specifications in the interpretation of the semantic role of the pronouns in question; and 121 (50.4%) instances whereby the violated the input feature specifications. Respondents from English High School Yaounde produced 84 (35%) instances which respected the input parameter settings and 156 (65%) instances which violated the input parameter settings.

In all, no group of respondents produced a number of instances that is above average. The best score (119 instances) was produced by the respondents from Government Bilingual Practicing High School Yaounde and Government Bilingual High School Essos. The worst performance was registered by the respondents from English High School (84 instances). These results show that there is call for concern as far as the interpretation of the semantic role of relative clause markers in embedded sentences was concerned. The mean percentage graph below graphically presents the results in a clearer and more explicit manner.
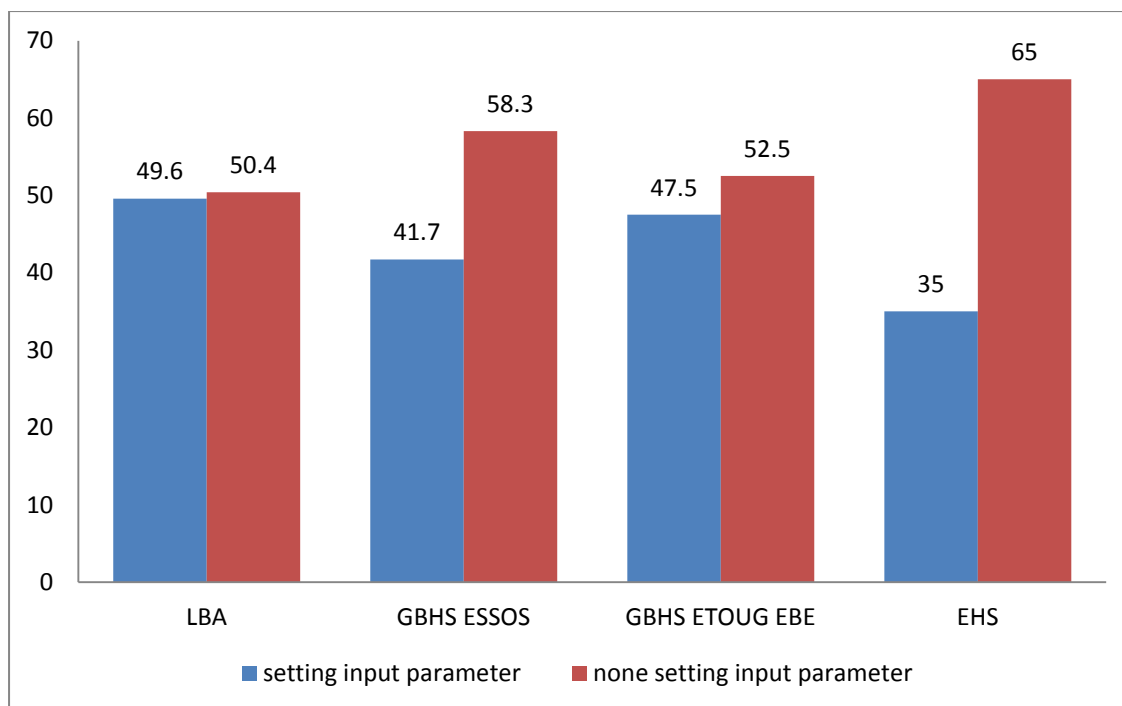
Fig.1: General mean percentage graph of respondents' performance

As can be seen in the mean percentage graph, respondents from GBPHS scored 48.6 % in the interpretation of the semantic role of the relative clause marker and 54.4% in violating the parameter settings of semantic roles. Respondents from GBHS Essos scored 41.7% in setting the parameter settings and 58.3% in violating the input parameters in semantic role interpretation. Respondents from GBHS Etoug-ebe scored 47.5% in respecting the semantic roles feature specifications and 52.5% in failing to set the parameters; and respondents from EHS Yaounde scored 35% in respecting the input feature specifications and 65% in violating the parameter settings. The statistics in the graph portray a lack of mastery of the relative clause markers as well as the inability to interpret the semantic role of relative clause markers in embedded sentences.

4.1.1 Respondents' performance in the identification of "which" as object of the verb

There were eighty scripts examined. A total number of two hundred and forty occurrences interpreted the semantic role of relative clause marker in the embedded sentence. This figure was got by counting the number of frequency in the twenty scripts multiplying the number by the number of alternative answers given per school which summed up to sixty instances. The total number of each school was then added to give a grand total of two hundred and forty

instances "which" that were analysed. The following table records the classification of respondents' performances in the identification of "which" as object of the verb per each of the schools.

Table 3: Respondents performance in the identification of "which" as object of the verb

school	Setting input parameter		None setting of input parameter		Total
	Number of instances	%	Number of instances	%	
LBA	21	35	39	65	60
GBHS ESSOS	25	41.7	35	58.3	60
GBHS ETOUG EBE	29	48.3	31	51.7	60
EHS	13	21.7	47	78.3	60
Total	**88**	**36.7**	**152**	**63.3**	**240**

The result in the table above shows that respondents produced 88 (36.7%) instances whereby they respected the parameter settings of the input-oriented feature specifications with regard to the interpretation of the semantic role of the relative pronoun tested. They also produced 152 (63.3%) instances whereby they used other parameter settings which violate the feature specifications of the input.

As concerns the different institutions, the respondents from Government Bilingual Practicing High School Yaounde produced 21(35%) instances whereby they set the input feature specifications in the interpretation of the semantic role of the pronouns in question; and 39 (65%) instances whereby the violated the input feature specifications. The respondents in Government Bilingual High School Essos produced 25(41.7%) instances whereby they respected the input feature specifications and 35 (58.3%) instances wherein they violated the semantic role input feature specifications. The respondents from Government Bilingual High School Etoug-Ebe produced 29(48.3%) instances wherein they set the input feature specifications in the interpretation of the semantic role of the pronouns in

question; and 31 (51.7%) instances whereby the violated the input feature specifications. Finally, respondents from English High School Yaounde produced 13 (21.7%) instances which respected the input parameter settings and 47 (78.3%) instances which violated the input parameter settings.

In all, no group of respondents produced a number of instances that is above average. The best score (29 instances) was produced by the respondents from Government Bilingual High school Etoug-Ebe and Government Bilingual High School Essos. The worst performance was registered by the respondents from English High School (13 instances). These results show that there is call for concern as far as the interpretation of the semantic role of relative clause markers in embedded sentences was concerned. The mean percentage graph below graphically presents the results in a clearer and more explicit manner.
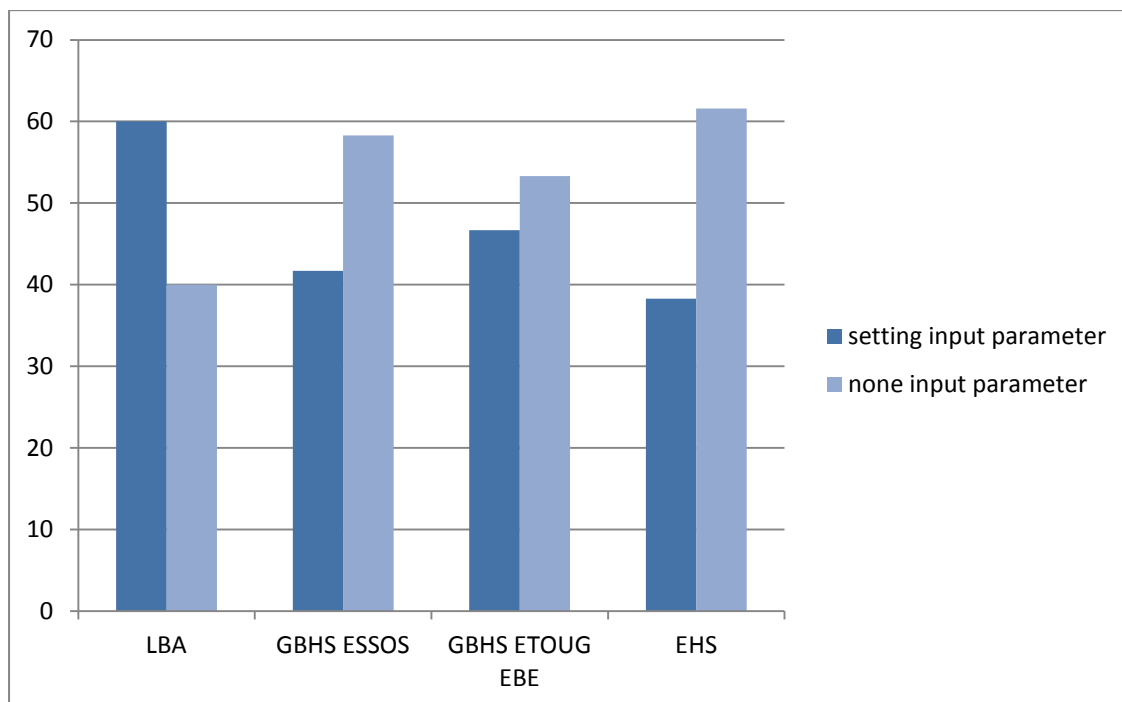
Figure 2: Respondent's performance in the identification of "which" as object of the verb

As can be perceived in the mean percentage graph, we will notice that respondents from GBHS Etoug-Ebe scored 48.3 % in the interpretation of the semantic role of the relative clause marker and 51.7% in violating the parameter settings of semantic roles. Also, respondents from GBHS Essos had a grade 41.7% in setting the parameter settings and 58.3% in violating the input parameters in semantic role interpretation. In the same light,

respondents from GBPHS Yaounde scored 35% in respecting the semantic roles feature specifications and 65% in failing to set the parameters; and respondents from EHS Yaounde scored 21.7% in respecting the input feature specifications and 78.3% in violating the parameter settings. The statistics in the graph portray a lack of mastery of the relative clause markers as well as the inability to interpret the semantic role of relative clause markers in embedded sentences.

4.1.2Respondents' performance in the identification of "who" as subject

Another aspect which this study set out to address respondents' performance in the identification of *"who"* as the subject of the verb in the relative clause*:" The police who arrested the thief ".* The nominative case *who* is used when it is in the subject position of the verb in a sentence. Thus, the main aim here is to find out if students are able to assign the right case to the verb. In this light informants were expected to give an appropriate answer for the question.

Table 4: Respondents' performance in the identification of "who" as subject

School	Setting input parameter		None setting of input parameter		Total
	Number of instances	%	Number of instances	%	
LBA	38	63.3	22	36.6	60
GBHS ESSOS	31	51.7	29	48.3	60
GBHS ETOUG EBE	34	56.7	26	43.3	60
EHS	27	45	33	55	60
Total	**130**	**54.1**	**110**	**45.8**	**240**

The outcome in the table above reveals that respondents' general performance yielded 130 (54.1%) instances whereby they were in line with the parameter settings of the input-oriented feature specifications with regard to the interpretation of the semantic role of the relative pronouns tested. They as well provided110 (45.8%) instances whereby they made use of other parameter settings which violate the feature specifications of the input.

With regard to the various institutions, the respondents from Government Bilingual Practicing High School Yaounde produced 38(63.3%) instances whereby they set the input feature specifications in the interpretation of the semantic role of the pronouns in question; and 22 (36.6%) instances wherein they violated the input feature specifications. Likewise, the respondents in Government Bilingual High School Etoug-Ebe produced 34(56.7%) instances whereby they respected the input feature specifications and 26 (43.3%) instances whereby they violated the semantic role input feature specifications. The respondents from Government Bilingual High School Essos equally derived31(51.7%) instances wherein they set the input feature specifications in the interpretation of the semantic role of the pronouns in question; and 29 (48.3%) instances whereby they violated the input feature specifications. In sum, respondents from English High School Yaounde yielded 27 (45%) instances which respected the input parameter settings and 33(55%) instances which violated the input parameter settings.

In all, three out of the four groups of respondents produced a number of instances that is above average. The group with the highest score brought forth (38 instances) which was produced by the respondents from Government Bilingual Practicing High School Yaounde, Government Bilingual High School Etoug-Ebe 34 and Government Bilingual High School Essos with 31. The worst performance was recorded by the respondents from English High School (27 instances).This shows an improvement in the performance of respondents from EHS as compared to the previous relative pronoun which was analysed. These statistics show that the respondents from the four schools have a better knowledge of the subjective case of the relative pronoun "who" in embedded sentences. As such more needs to be done to improve on their performance. The mean percentage graph below graphically presents the results in a clearer and more explicit manner.
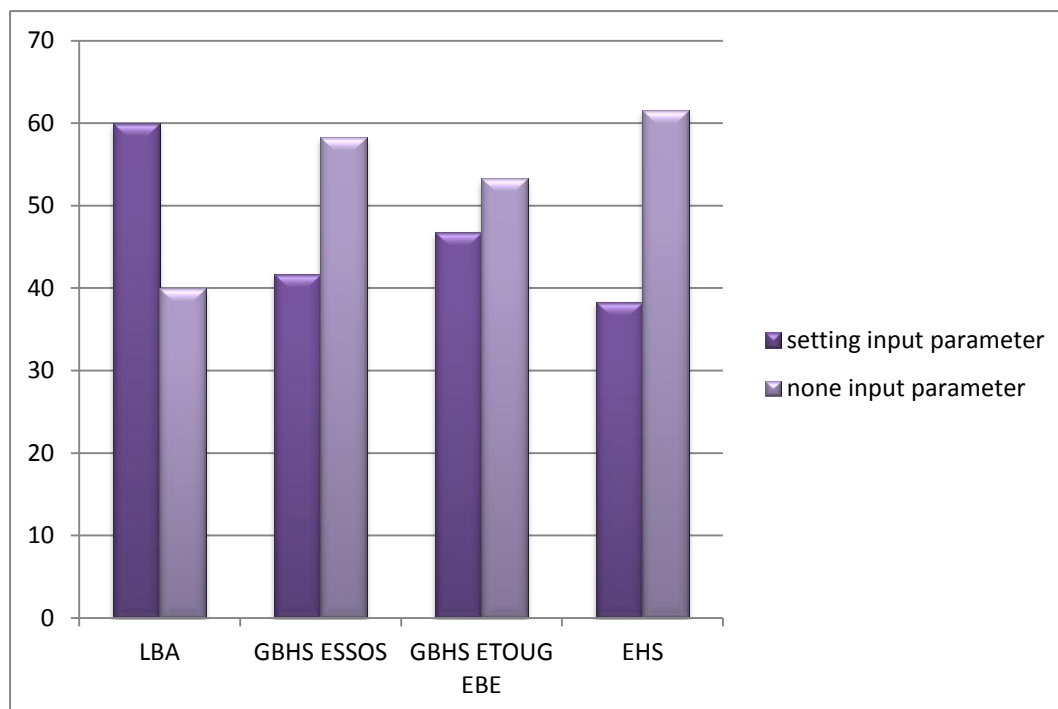
Figure 3: Respondents' performance in the identification of "who" as subject

The mean percentage graph above presents a glimpse of respondents'' performance, we will realize that respondents from GBPHS Yaounde recorded 63.3 % in the interpretation of the semantic role of the relative clause marker and 36.6% in violating the parameter settings of semantic roles. Likewise, respondents from GBHS Etoug–Ebe had a score of 56.7% in setting the parameter settings and 43.3% in violating the input parameters in semantic role interpretation. In the same light, respondents from GBHS Essos scored 51.1% in respecting the semantic roles feature specifications and 48.3% in failing to set the parameters; and respondents from EHS Yaoundeyielded45% in respecting the input feature specifications and 55% in violating the parameter settings. The statistics in the graph shows a level of mastery of the relative clause marker "who" as such their ability to interpret the semantic role of relative clause markers in embedded sentences.

4.1.3Respondents' performance in the identification of "whom: as object of the verb

The informants were equally asked to identify the objective case of the relative pronoun *"whom"* in the embedded sentence: *"the person whom we visited last night is my teacher"*. It is worth noting that the accusative case form *whom* is employed when it is the object of a verb or a preposition. They were supposed to give a response respecting the

parameters. These responses which were provided by the students are presented and analysed on the table

Table 5: Respondents' performance in the identification of "whom: as object of the verb.

school	Setting input parameter		None setting of input parameter		Total
	Number of instances	%	Number of instances	%	
LBA	24	40	36	60	60
GBHS ESSOS	19	31.7	41	68.3	60
GBHS ETOUG EBE	28	46.7	32	53.3	60
EHS	21	35	35	58.3	60
Total	92	38.3	144	60	240

The results in the table above shows that respondents' performance yielded 92 (38.3%) instances whereby they were in line with the parameter settings of the input-oriented feature specifications with regard to the interpretation of the semantic role of the relative pronouns tested. They as well provided144 (60%) instances whereby they made use of other parameter settings which violate the feature specifications of the input.

With regard to the various institutions, the respondents from Government Bilingual High School Etoug-Ebe produced 28 (46.7%) instances whereby they set the input feature specifications in the interpretation of the semantic role of the pronouns in question; and 32 (53.3%) instances wherein they violated the input feature specifications. Likewise, the respondents in Government Bilingual Practicing High School Yaounde produced 24(40%) instances whereby they respected the input feature specifications and 36 (60%) instances whereby they violated the semantic role input feature specifications. The respondents from English High School Yaounde equally derived21(35%) instances wherein they set the input feature specifications in the interpretation of the semantic role of the pronouns in question;

and 35 (58.3%) instances whereby they violated the input feature specifications. In sum, respondents from Government Bilingual High School Essos, yielded 19 (31.7%) instances, which respected the input parameter settings and 41(68.3%) instances which violated the input parameter settings.

In all, no group of respondents produced a number of instances that is above average. The group with the highest score brought forth (28 instances) which was produced by the respondents from Government Bilingual High School Etoug - Ebe, Government Bilingual Practicing High School Yaounde (24 instances) and English High School (21 instances). The worst performance was registered by the respondents from Government Bilingual High School Essos with (19 instances). These results show that there is call for concern as far as the interpretation of the semantic role of relative clause marker "whom" in embedded sentences was concerned. The mean percentage graph is explicitly presented below for clarity.
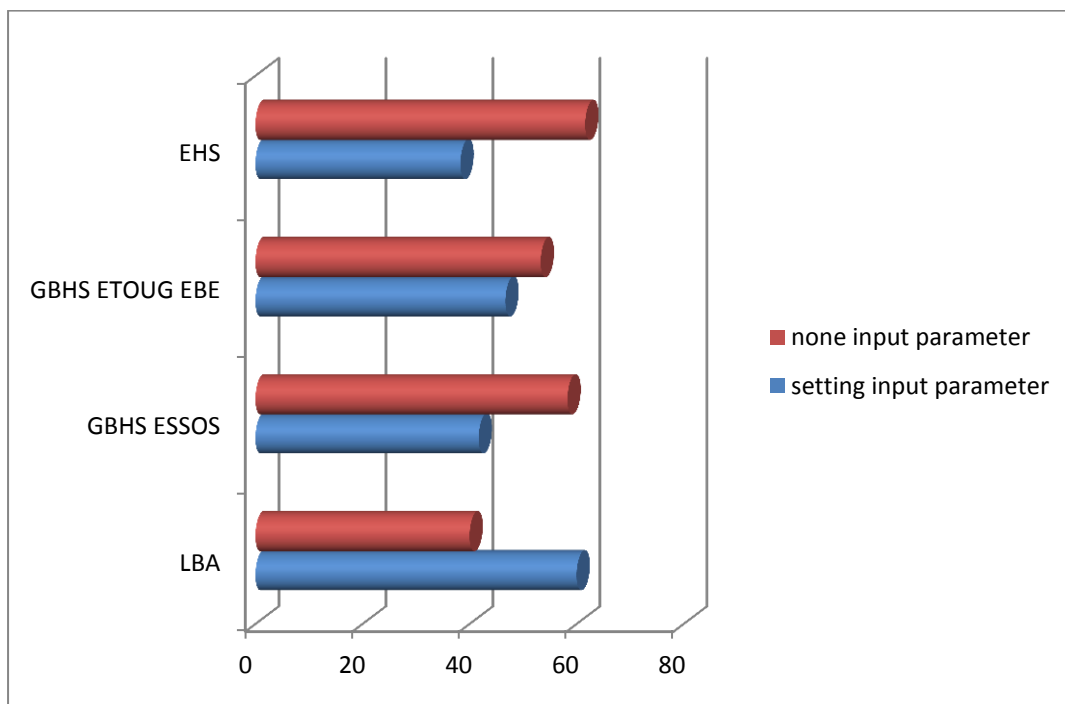

Figure4: Respondents' performance in the identification of "whom: as object of the verb.

As can be viewed in the mean percentage graph, respondents from GBPHS scored 40 % in the interpretation of the semantic role of the relative clause marker and 60% in violating the parameter settings of semantic roles. Respondents from GBHS Essos scored 31.7% in

setting the parameter settings and 68.3% in violating the input parameters in semantic role interpretation. Respondents from GBHS Etoug-ebe scored 46.7% in respecting the semantic roles feature specifications and 53.3% in failing to set the parameters; and respondents from EHS Yaounde scored 35% in respecting the input feature specifications and 58.3% in violating the parameter settings. The statistics in the graph portray a lack of mastery of the relative clause markers as well as the inability to interpret the semantic role of relative clause markers in embedded sentences.

4.1.4Respondents' performance in the identification of "which": as subject of the verb

As the study progressed, the informants were asked to say whether the relative pronoun *"which"* is the object or subject of the verb. This is to find out if the students can identify the dual role of *which.* In some cases it plays the role of the subject in the sentence or the object of the sentence depending on its construction. Unlike in sentence one where *"which"* acted as the object of the verb here is not the case because it functions as the subject. Thus, this is what we set out to know. Consequently, the responses are presented on the table below as follows.

Table 6: Respondents' performance in the identification of "which": as subject of the verb.

School	Setting input parameter		None setting of input parameter		Total
	Number of instances	%	Number of instances	%	
LBA	36	60	24	40	60
GBHS ESSOS	25	41.7	35	58.3	60
GBHS ETOUG EBE	28	46.7	32	53.3	60
EHS	23	38.3	37	61.6	60
Total	112	46.7	128	53.3	240

The results in the table above shows that respondents' performance yielded 112 (46.7%) instances whereby they were in line with the parameter settings of the input-oriented

feature specifications with regard to the interpretation of the semantic role of the relative pronouns tested. They as well provided128 (53.3%) instances whereby they made use of other parameter settings which violate the feature specifications of the input.

With regard to the various institutions, the respondents from Government Bilingual Practicing High School Yaoundeproduced36(60%) instances whereby they set the input feature specifications in the interpretation of the semantic role of the pronouns in question; and 24(40%) instances wherein they violated the input feature specifications. Likewise, the respondents in Government Bilingual High School Essos produced 25(41.7%) instances whereby they respected the input feature specifications and 35 (58.3%) instances whereby they violated the semantic role input feature specifications. The respondents from English High School Yaounde equally derived23(38.3%) instances wherein they set the input feature specifications in the interpretation of the semantic role of the pronouns in question; and 37(61.6%) instances whereby they violated the input feature specifications. In sum, respondents from Government Bilingual High School Etoug – Ebe yielded 28 (46.7%) instances which respected the input parameter settings and 32(53.3%) instances which violated the input parameter settings.

In all, just one group of respondents produced a number of instances that is above average. The group with the highest score brought forth (36 instances) which was produced by the respondents from Government Bilingual Practicing High School Yaounde, Government Bilingual High School Etoug – Ebe (28 instances) and Government Bilingual High School Essos (25 instances). The least performance was registered by the respondents from English High School Yaounde with (23 instances). These results show that there is call for concern as far as the interpretation of the semantic role of relative clause marker "whom" in embedded sentences was concerned. The mean percentage graph is explicitly presented below for clarity.
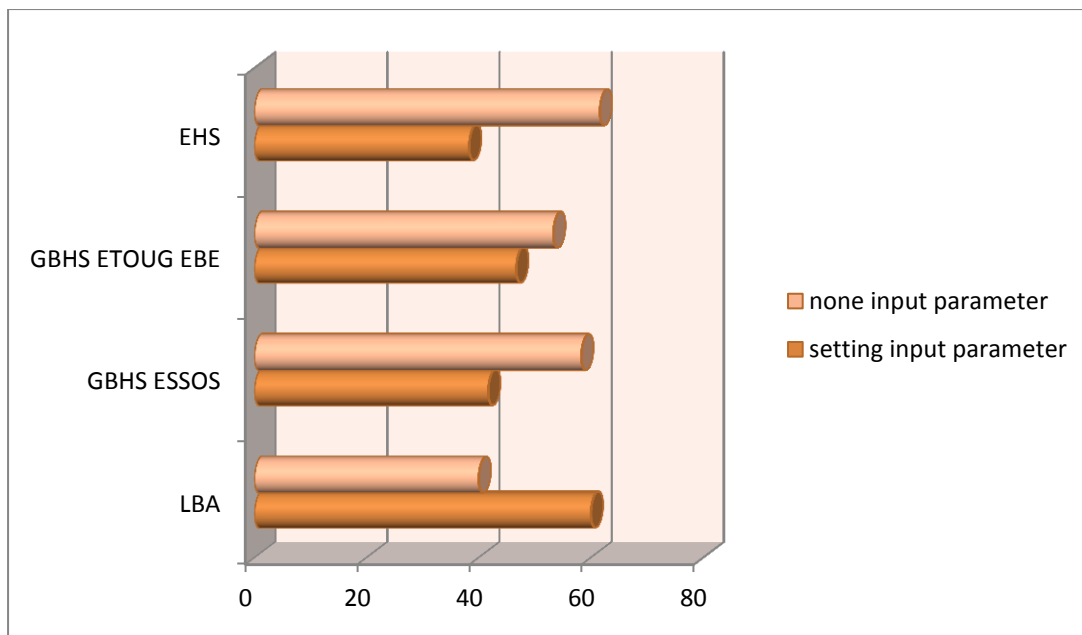
Figure 5: Respondents' performance in the identification of "which": as subject of the verb.

As can be viewed in the mean percentage graph, respondents from GBPHS scored 40 % in the interpretation of the semantic role of the relative clause marker and 60% in violating the parameter settings of semantic roles. Respondents from GBHS Essos scored 31.7% in setting the parameter settings and 68.3% in violating the input parameters in semantic role interpretation. Respondents from GBHS Etoug-ebe scored 46.7% in respecting the semantic roles feature specifications and 53.3% in failing to set the parameters; and respondents from EHS Yaounde scored 35% in respecting the input feature specifications and 58.3% in violating the parameter settings. The statistics in the graph portray a lack of mastery of the relative clause markers as well as the inability to interpret the semantic role of relative clause markers in embedded sentences.

4.2 Feature specifications

This section sets out to analyse the frequency of occurrence of relative clause in students' essays, to see which of these relative pronouns is, mostly used and finally to identify the semantic role (nominative or accusative) assigned to the relative pronouns in their writings.After careful scrutiny of the scripts of the subjects involved with this research, some deviant features were identified and deemed necessary to be discussed. According to the data provided for this study, it could be observed that the manifestations of some of these features

were global which gave room for a general analysis. This will be discussed in the subsequent lines.

4.2.1 Identification of subject "which" as object pronoun

The relative pronoun "which" when found in the sentence performs either the function of a subject or object. The knowledge of this dual function of the relative clause marker poses a problem to the respondents as they find difficulties identifying the role of the "which" in the objective case. Thus, it is not frequently used. They equally do not know that the relative pronoun is used just for animal and things but tend to use it to refer to persons. This is illustrated in the example below

1) *The man **which I noticed** driving the bus appeared to be very drunk.
2) *The children **which I saw** crossing the road from school were knocked down by the speeding car.
3) *The vehicle on **whom water** was poured kept burning.
4) *The car **who** the onlookers lifted covered a victim.

As can be inferred from the above examples, the relative pronoun "which" has been used in the wrong context in example (1 and 2) as it has been used to refer to persons instead of things. This proves that they lack a mastery of the function relative pronoun "which" in an embedded sentence.

4.2.2 Identification of object "which" as subject pronoun

Also, in the respondents' free writing, it was equally noted that the relative pronoun "which" appeared twelve times mostly in the subjective position. This is certainly because they are not aware of the semantic roles of "which" which can either be found in the subject and object positions respectively. As a result, they tend to use more of it in the subjective case as illustrated below.

5. It was about 6:00pm when a bus driver and a truck had a clash on the road the Tiko-Douala **which led** to the loss of lives.
6. It was an accident **which killed** everybody and there was only one survival from that accident.

It is worth noting that the relative pronouns have different functions when they appear in a sentence and this will depend on their antecedent that comes before the relative pronoun which determines the case of the relative pronoun

4.2.3 Identification of subject "who" as subject pronoun

It is worth noting that the relative pronoun "who" occupies the nominative position in a sentence as such it is used only when we refer to persons. These are some instances found in the writings of some respondents.

7. One woman **who heard** the voice of the child removed her out of the house.
8. A man's documents **who travelled** were burnt in the accident.
9. The noise of the explosion attracted the attention of neighbours who called upon the fire fighting brigade.
10. A bike knocked down a 10 year old child who was rushing to school that morning.

From the above examples, it can be noticed that the frequent use of this pronoun as the subject pronoun shows a certain degree of mastery of this relative pronoun. As a result they face little difficulties in using it.

4.2.4 Identification of object "whom" as object pronoun

The relative pronoun "whom" often appear in the objective position in a sentence. This less frequent use of this pronoun is an indication that the respondents are faced with the problem of its usage. In the scripts which were analysed, just one instance of the usage of the relative pronoun in the objective case was noticed. This can be seen from the lone example below.

11. I witnessed a motor accident between the bike man and the lady **whom he carried** on his bike.

4.2.5 Substitution of "who" for "whom"

In English, the relative pronouns have different uses but students are ignorant of these uses and tend to use the relative pronouns wrongly. Most often than not, they get confused with

use "who and whom" and put "who" instead of "whom" in a sentence. This is illustrated in the example below.

12. *An injured man to who special attendance was given because of no critical state first rejected people who stood by his side.

13. *A mentally deranged who no one knows entered the road and caused a terrible accident.

This shows that the respondents get confused in the usage of "whom" and "who" in the sentence. Most often they use "who" in the place of "whom". This is a clear indication that they don't master the uses of some of the relative pronoun.

4.2.5 Substitution of "which" for "who"

The relative pronoun "which" used for things is most at times used to refer to persons in sentences. As such, this makes the sentence ungrammatical. This is seen in the example below.

14. *The man **which was driving** the bus appeared to be very drunk.

15. *The Doctors **which came** here to rescue the victims were polite.

From the example, it can be noticed that the students do not know which relative pronoun is used to refer to persons and things thus the wrong usage.

Novelty syntactic features

A thorough perusal of the written production of the students enabled the identification of some novel syntactic features. Some of these novel syntactic features extracted from the free writing components of the production test include

16. I love the car **whose killed** the pupil.

17. . Francis showed the area **whom the accident** took place.

As can be noticed above the relative pronouns have been wrongly used as they don't appear in their right position. The genitive case "whose" has been used in the place of "which" as

subject pronoun. The same ties with the object pronoun "whom" which has been used in the place of a relative adverb.

4.2.1 The problem of Case

Case in grammar refers to the syntactic functions of nouns in a sentence. There exist three main cases in the English language: the subjective, the objective and the genitive cases. Any pronoun replacing or pointing back to a particular noun has to take into consideration the case or function of the noun in question in the sentence in which it is found because, most often, pronouns change form with a change in case. As far as relative pronouns and relative clauses as per the data collected for this study are concerned, the problem was observed at the level of the objective and subjective cases. A good number of students who used relative pronouns in their writings made use of mostly (which, who, that). It was observed with dismay that among all the scripts that were analysed, there was only one instance of the use of the relative pronoun "whom" in the sentence. This is a clear indication that they avoid using it because they do not master its usage well. Thus, they tend to avoid it in order not to use it in the wrong context or what they consider wrong context because they do not also use the other pronouns correctly

18. I witnessed a motor accident between the bike man and the lady **whom he carried** on his bike.

This might be unbelievable but the bitter truth is, of the eighty respondents who were involved in this research, the above sentence is the only case in which the relative pronoun 'whom' featured in the essays which were analysed. Fortunately it appears in the right context. Also, While going through the essays of the respondents, it was observed that these respondents were more at ease using 'that' for the objective and subjective cases respectively as can be seen in the examples below:

19. As for the child **that was crushed** by the car, the police greatly apologized to her mother.
20. It was not a serious accident **that I saw** on Monday morning.

Also, in the respondents' free writing, it was equally noted that the relative pronoun "which" appeared twelfth times mostly in the subjective position. This is certainly

because they are not aware of the semantic roles of "which" which can either be found in the subjective and objective positions respectively. As a result, they tend to use more of it in the subjective case as illustrated below.

21. It was about 6:00pm when a bus driver and a truck had a clash on the road the Tiko-Douala **which led** to the loss of lives.
22. It was an accident **which killed** everybody and there was only one survival from that accident.

It is important to point out that the relative pronouns have different functions when they appear in a sentence and this will depend on their antecedent that comes before the relative pronoun which determines the case of the relative pronoun. The wide use of the relative pronoun "who"is an indication that the students are versed with this relative pronoun, as such feel very comfortable using it. The performance as can be seen on the data earlier presented attests to this fact: 54.1% for "who" (see table 2). This can be viewed in the following sentences.

23. One old woman **who heard** the voice of the child removed the child from the house.
24. The noise of the explosion attracted the attention of the neighbours **who called** upon the fire fighting brigade.

It is worthy of note that all the utterances that were presented were provided by the respondents themselves. From the above analyses, it can be seen that the students know the relative pronouns but do not really know their uses. It is important to note that the relative pronouns have different functions when they appear in a sentence and this will depend on the antecedent that comes before the relative pronoun which determines the case of the relative pronoun. The analyses shows that the students are versed with some of the relative pronoun, but "which" seems to pose a problem as they may not be aware of the dual function of it and often use it in the wrong context. As a result, they tend to avoid the use of "whom" because they are not very confident with the context in which it is used. This proves students' inability to use the relative clause "which" correctly. This is as a result of the fact that they may not know that it plays two functions which can either be subjective or objective depending on the sentence. In this light, many students shy away from using it for fear of using it in the wrong way. Compared to the others, students have a better mastery of the other relative pronouns (who, which).

Conclusion

This chapter was out to present and discuss the data that was collected for this study. As such, the data collected has been classified with the aid of tables and figures. Data was collected from two sets of production test. The first set of questions was administered to students of upper sixth arts in GBHS Etoug -Ebe, LBA Yaounde, Lycee Bilingue de Essos and EHS Yaounde. Twenty students were sampled in each of these schools, making a total of 80 students. The production test that was designed for students constituted four items which aimed at investigating the students' ability to interpret relative clauses in complex sentences. The second set comprised of an essay where students were expected to write and see how often they make use of relative pronouns and the semantic role assigned to them.These tables and the figures have been explained and other features which were specific to the written productions of the respondents discussed.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, PEDAGOGICAL RELEVANCE AND CONCLUSION

5.0 Introduction

This chapter presents summary of findings obtained from the investigation of the interpretation of semantic roles of relative clause markers in embedded sentences. It equally delves into the pedagogical relevance of the study, makes some recommendations to teachers, students and the education authorities. It also provides suggestions for further research and draws a conclusion to the study.

5.1 Summary of Findings

The study case theory and the interpretation of relative clause markers by ESL learners of some selected schools in Yaounde are carried out within two main theoretical premises: the case theory (Chomsky 1981) and the theta theory (Chomsky 1981). These theories help us to better comprehend the interpretation of semantic role of relative clause markers in embedded sentences. In this study, we set out to analyze how Upper Sixth students can interpret the semantic role of relative clause markers in complex sentences and the difficulties noticeable in the upper sixth students processing of the semantic role of the relative clause markers in English. Following an examination of the corpus provided as data for this study, a good number of features, which do not go in line with the syntactic property of noun phrases stipulated in the Case Theory, could be identified.

Broadly speaking, it was observed that respondents have an issue using the right pronoun respecting the case which could either be nominative, accusative of genitive case. As such they come with the wrong structures.

*The axe **who was used** to break the car to save the victim is blunt.

*The Doctors **which came** here to rescue the victims were polite.

*Here is the principle **whom son** died in the fire incident.

The above structures violate the syntactic property of noun phrases as they have been wrongly used in the sentence. The relative clause markers, that is say, the pronouns which

begin the relative clauses, in the sentences above do not fall in the proper case. In the first example, the relative clause pronoun "who" which marks the relative clauses (who was used) co-refers with the antecedent NP "axe" but does not co-index with it. The relative pronoun "who" co-refers with the antecedent NP "axe" because it points back to the antecedent NP "axe" in this context . However, it violates the case of person because the relative pronoun "who" points back to a human being and not to a thing. As such, in the case of the first sample above, the antecedent NP "axe" and the relative clause marker "who" do not co-index. Thus the sentence is ungrammatical.

Looking at the second example, the relative pronoun "which" which introduces, the relative clause ("which" came here rescued the victims) co-refers with the antecedent NP "the Doctors" but equally violates the case of person. With regard to the relative pronoun "which", the antecedent could be a thing or an animate but not a person. As a result, the antecedent NP "the doctors" and the relative pronoun "which" which refers back to the NP " the doctors " for its interpretation do not co-index because they do not agree with the case of person.

In the third sample, the relative pronoun "whom" which begins the relative clause (whom father is ill) is out of place as it does neither co-refer nor co-index with the antecedent NP "the student". Hence, the sample is ungrammatical because it does not meet the phi − features of binding theory principle B. This implies to the neither fourth and last sample given above whereby the relative clauses marker "whom" and the antecedent NP do not neither co- refer nor co- index.

Apart from these general findings, there are some specific features which have been identified in the data provided and which need to be highlighted here. These features include substitution of relative pronoun "which" for "who". The data provided reveal a repeated substitution of the relative pronoun "which" for "who" in situations where the antecedent is not a person. In the relative pronoun "who" in this case does not co-index with its antecedent NP .Hence, there is violation of case in the Case Theory.

Another feature specification used by the respondents is the substitution of the relative pronoun "who" for "which". Respondents used the relative pronoun "which" to establish an agreement with an antecedent noun phrase which denotes a person (e.g. the mad woman is considered the person which caused the accident). In this sample, the relative pronoun "which" is supposed to point back to things and not human beings but in this situation it is rather pointing back to human beings. Consequently, there is no agreement between the

relative clause marker and the antecedent because they do not co-refer. This phenomena can be justified because there is no distinction in the French language between the relative pronoun "which" and "who" which are rendered in French discourse as "qui", it is important to emphasize here that French and English do not have the same parameter settings. This could be as a result of the influence of the French language on this students since they spend most of their times speaking French rather than English. As a result, the negative transfer of the French parameter settings into the English language by learners. This accounts for the reason why they use the relative pronouns "who" and "which" interchangeably. This is a call for concern with regard to pedagogy and the designing of instructional materials to meet the need of the learners. The next feature specification is the substitution of a case form for another case form.

It is apparent that the notion of case in grammar has to do with the syntactic functions of nouns in a sentence. As can be seen from the data collected, it has been observed that the subject relative pronoun "who" is substituted for an object relative pronoun "whom" in some cases and in some others the relative pronoun "that" substitutes its counterpart "whom" and "which". This phenomenon is also an aspect of negative transfer from the learners' second official language (French) into English. This is evident by the fact that English objective case relative pronouns (whom, which, and that) are rendered in French discourse as "que" hence the respondents have taken this parameter into the English language. other case forms that have been substituted include the substitution of the object relative pronoun "which" for the genitive case "whose: and substitution of the subjective relative adverb "where" for the object relative pronoun" whom" besides the above –stated features, another glaring feature that is identified in the data provided is the substitution of the relative pronoun "who" for "that" in non- defining relative clauses.

The findings from data provided, show that respondents substitute the relative pronouns "which" and "who" for the relative pronoun "that" in defining and non- defining relative clauses respectively. It is healthy to recall here that the relative clause marker "that" is only valid for restrictive or defining relative clauses. Despite this stipulation, it was noticed in the data provided that respondents employ the relative pronoun "that" in non − defining relative clauses (e.g., some neighbours that they stay around them, help when they are not around). In this example, the relative clause,[that stay around them], is a non-defining relative clause because that can be taken out without truncating the meaning of the sentence. This is because the main idea here is that "neighbours help when they are not around". In this

case, the relative pronoun "that" is not a substitute for "who". This could be as a result of the fact that the relative clause marker "that" is a general purpose relative pronoun used irrespective of gender or case (Quirk et al., 1973). In the same vein, the substitution of the relative adverb for "that" is another salient finding.

In terms of syntactic features, a novelty in the free writing components of the production test. It is a little difficult to say with certainty what accounts for the production of such utterances by these learners of English. This is proof of poor mastery of the language system and the grammatical point concerned. Hence, a major call for concern as it raises pedagogical issues.

Also learners tend to avoid relative clauses due to the difficulties arising from identifying the function and the right utilization of the relative pronouns. This is particularly the case with the relative pronoun "whom" where out of the scripts that were analysed, there was only one instance of "whom" which was used in the objective position. This only goes to strengthen the point that the learners do not master this relative clause marker as used it less frequently in their writing as a result of the difficulty they encounter in its usage. It was also noticed from the analysis that subject relative clause markers are easier to produce and understand than object relative clause markers. The results showed that subject relatives (relative pronouns functioning as the subjects) are used more frequently than object relatives.

In sum, it was observed that Upper Sixth Arts students violate the input parameter as they give a wrong interpretation of the semantic role of relative clause markers in complex sentences. This is as a result of a lack of mastery and knowledge of relative clause markers and the semantic property assigned to them in complex sentences. In a nutshell, it was noticed that ESL learners present a variety of strange features as far as the use of relative clauses and the mastery of antecedent agreement are concerned. When it comes to the use of relative clause markers, these learners project a range of features which do not tie with those of the Case Theory.

5.2 Pedagogical Relevance

Language plays a great role in the community all over the world as a means of communication among people who speak it. Some of them are the learners of the language; so they are in need to learn this language. A language needs to be practiced by many ways

such as using the four skills of the language. We must have a background and the knowledge about the language itself; therefore, it is vitally important for ESL learners of English language to master it, to know the grammatical functions of the language and how they are formed. One of the grammatical aspects that students usually encounter problems in is on relativization. Most often than not, English language course books and other learning materials tend to provide very little information on relative clauses and their usage. This often has a negative impact on the students' comprehension of that aspect of grammar. The lack of this knowledge makes learners avoid its use in their writing. Consequently, the inability of students to interpret the semantic role of the relative clause markers in complex sentences reveals the difficulties noticed in processing of the semantic role of the relative clause markers in English.

The outcome of the study is expected to be of benefit to learners, teachers and the educational authorities in various ways. The study is of utmost importance to the learners because it will present first the relative clause markers and their different usages which will equip them in properly using it with much confidence. It will equally serve as a guide in the identification of it semantic role in a complex sentence. This is because if the students are able to identify the uses of the relative markers such "which" (subject or object pronoun used for animals and things), "who" (subject pronoun used for people), "whom" (object pronoun for people) and "that" (subject or object pronoun for people and things), then it will be much easier for them to identify its semantic role without any difficulty.

It is an appropriate pedagogical material in the teaching of English to ESL learners. This is because it provides a rationale for constructing language lessons in ESL context which are more appealing to this set of students, taking into consideration the syntactic configuration that will develop learner's competency and autonomy.

The findings will inspire teachers to improve on their competence and adopt new and better approaches to teaching relative pronouns and adverbs. In the same light, it is of help to students in highlighting the features that will enable them to become efficient in using relative pronouns and adverbs. Moreover, it is going to create awareness in English language teachers of the need to raise the consciousness of learners' ability to interpret the semantic role of the relative pronouns in complex sentences.

5.3 Recommendations

The purpose of this study is to make the learning of the English language more effective and efficient to its learners in a developing country like Cameroon. It is intended to contribute to the various ways in which students will learn the English language with a lot of enthusiasm.

According to the findings discussed above, there are some recommendations which are incorporated in the conclusion of this study. Students should extend their knowledge in the field of grammar by studying more grammar books and doing more research on grammar books as it will enhance their knowledge in the language. English language students should not just restrict their study on academic curricula, but should read books which contain relative clauses other than what they are taught in the classroom. Students should practice relative pronouns in sentences more and more in order to be aware of their usage and their semantic role. Relative clauses should be taught at an early stage in details. This is because if it is introduced at an early stage before they get to an advanced stage in education they must have mastered the relative clause as such giving a proper interpretation of the semantic role of the relative clause marker.

5.3.1 Recommendation to educational authorities

It is believed that decision makers play a vital role in fostering educational and language policies. Consequently, it is recommended that the position that English language is given in the English subsystem of education be revised. English language learning in [particular in particular and French and English language learning should be obligatory in the strict sense of it. That is, they should be done as far as the importance of being bilingual is concerned. This will go in line with Mbangwana's (2004) argument that the interrogative motivation the government has provided so far will be more fruitful only when it is preceded by instrumental motivation which provides material incentives. Individuals should be shown what they will personally gain if they become bilingual. This is to say that, if learners have at the back of their minds that they have something, in fact so much to gain from English, they will pay more attention when it comes to learning this language.

Furthermore, inspectors should be sent to the field more often: not only to check the assiduity of the teachers but also to get to interact with the learners and find out their difficulties. They

could also do this by giving short and brief impromptu tests on what should have been covered already on the program at the time of their visit. This way, the teachers will automatically take their teaching more seriously and the learners will always be somehow more keen and ready. This can be quite demanding but is also quite possible.

In addition, it is no news that the problem of overcrowded classrooms is a very crucial one especially when it comes to language teaching. Not only does it make it so difficult, if not impossible, for some language exercises to be appropriately carried out, but it also makes it difficult for the teacher to be able adequately follow up the learner. No wonder the performance in the special bilingual class was plausible. From the outset, which is from sixieme, there are just a little above twenty students in special bilingual class. And now in premiere they are just a little above twenty because some of them have gone to the science classes. Here the teacher/student ratio is a very good one and this has enabled adequate follow up. Sixty students per class is supposed to be normal enrolment as stipulated by the rules and regulations in force. But we sometimes find this number being doubtful in a single classroom. There is need to foster the respect of the texts in force.

5.3.2 Recommendations to school Authorities

Schools authorities have the responsibility to encourage and motivate learners in the learning of English language. They need to come up with language laboratory in order to encourage and motivate learners in the learning and speaking of the two official languages (French & English). Also, libraries need to be made up of enough interesting and appealing material in English in order to arouse students' interest. Time could be set aside for each class under the supervision of their teachers to do extensive reading. This will entail borrowing a book from the library reading it and making a little summary that will be presented to the teacher or even the entire class. To this way, learners become in contact with the language. Also school authorizes should organize competitions in each of the classes with genuine and attractive rewards to winners. This will go a long way to encourage team work in the various classes as the learners shall take up the challenge to work hard to win the competition. Beautiful, attractive and interesting posters in English should be put up everywhere on the campus .this keeps the learners unconsciously in contact with the language. In addition, English clubs should be created and the activities of these clubs should be made attractive to entice the students.

5.3.3 Recommendations to teachers

Teachers have it as a duty, not only to provide the learners with short term motivation (getting them interested in the lesson of the day) but also with long term motivation (getting the learners interested in the language in general. When learners are motivated, it makes the teaching / learning process easier as they do not take anything for granted and would not want to let any detail concerning the grammar of the language pass them by. Also teachers should check how well their students have understood grammatical rules and should frequently encourage them to initiate request for clarification. Moreover, teachers should be able to at every point in time do a contrastive analysis between the French languages the English language. For instance, in teaching the relative pronouns, the teacher should do a contrastive analysis between who and whom, as well as the English relative object relative pronouns(whom, which, that) . Also teachers should embark on form-focused, and function –focused instructions. This will enable the learners of English in general and the learning of relative pronouns to develop autonomy and acquire linguistic competence (knowledge of form and meaning) and communicative competence (knowledge of form, meaning and function).Teachers are advised to do more research to enable them teach relative clauses with ease as this is an area where most teacher avoid teaching because of the lack of mastery. Thus, they should take it as a challenge to improve on their knowledge of relative clauses by doing more research rather than relying only on the text books which have been provided to them. Teachers should teach relative clause markers in details rather than just identifying them as relative pronouns without giving their semantic roles in a sentence.

5.3.4 Recommendations to parents

Parents have a fundamental role in enabling their children to develop interest in the English language by interacting with them using the language at home. Parents are equally encouraged to buy language books for their children and also give them a helping hand at home as this will boost their interest in the language. For it is said that charity begins at home. They can make the learner work by following him or her up and by challenging the latter with situations that need them to make use of English. Parents should provide their children with a great exposure to the English language. Apart from getting the main course book and encouraging their children to use it , they should also get other material in English and challenge their children to go through them as often as possible. They should equally

make their children watch and listen to programs in English. Children can also be registered in linguistic centers by their parents in order to keep them in contact with the language and to get them improve upon their proficiency in the language.

5.3.5 Recommendation to curriculum designers

It is recommended that curriculum designers for second circle in Cameroon should endeavor to incorporate a detailed explanation of relative clauses and their semantic roles in course books. They should equally present it at an early stage so that they get used to using it in class and out of the classroom freely. Thus this serve as a contributing factor to the language as it will prevent learners from avoiding the constructions.

5.3.6 Recommendations to learners

Learners are target and the sole purpose for which researches of this sort are carried out. Consequently, they have to be seriously implicated as far as learning the language is concerned. While every other thing is being put at their disposal, they have to get themselves activity involved in constructing their own knowledge. This goes from being attentive in class to putting in personal extra effort after classes. They are encouraged to use games in the learning of English as well as follow-up programs in English on television and radio. They have to take part actively in extensive reading in order to develop autonomy through transformation of input into intake.

5.3.7 Recommendations to course book writers

Course book writers are called upon to integrate learning activities which lay emphasis on the form, meaning and the function of every language point that is presented. This will enable English language learners to practice the input and transform it to intake.

5.3.8 Recommendations to linguistic centers

Linguistic centers can be quite instrumental as far as the quality of grammar produced by a learner is concerned. The problems are, how affordable are these centers? Hence, they are called upon to deliver intensive courses at an affordable fee.

5.4 Suggestion for further research

A complete research is one which demands a lot of time and other aspects. This study is therefore a partial contribution to the topic. As a continuation from where this study ends, further research could be made into other or related aspects in the interpretation of relative clauses by learners of the English language. This study has done an analysis of case theory and the interpretation of relative clause markers by ESL learners in some selected schools in Yaounde.

A study can be carried out on the same topic with university students. By this, we mean to find out how university students interpret the semantic role of relative clause markers and to know if they have a good mastery of it. A similar study can be done about relative clause, their markers as well as their function. Also, research can be carried out to improve the English language course books used to teach ESL learners so as to facilitate comprehension.

5.5 Difficulties Encountered by the Researcher

One of the difficulties encountered in carrying out this study was the nonchalant attitude of the students in some schools. Filling in the production test was considered boring as they were so much taken into their GCE preparations. At times, students collected but did not fill in the production test and rather returned it blank even under the supervision of their teacher and the researcher. Some students walked out of class when the production test was being administered giving one excuse or another. Out of 40 copies that were administered per class only above half were submitted filled. Students were willing to fill in section A since it was multiple-choice, but a good number rumbled over section B which was the essay. Some of the students were not very conversant with relative clause markers which made them fill in the production test but lacked confidence in their responses with some doubting and finally providing no answer for the question asked. Meanwhile in other schools, the students were very cooperative even though they complained and grumbled but they ended up taking the test to the satisfaction of the researcher.

Also, in some schools the teachers made things difficult for the researcher to collect data from their classes. They had as explanation the need of wanting to complete their syllabuses, as such; the researcher had little or no time to administer her production test. They

proposed that the test be administered for the students to take home and fill. It is by the grace of God that the teachers finally allowed the researcher administer her test under their supervision and even helped in the collection of scripts. However, despite the number of difficulties faced, the researcher managed her way out. This can be seen in the fact that she got credible material which was analyzed to meet the aims of this study.

5.6 Conclusion

This chapter handled the conclusion of the study and presented the summary of findings, pedagogical relevance, recommendations, suggestion for further research and the difficulties encountered by the researcher in the course of carrying out the research. It presents the sum total of the study what it set out to do and the outcome of the findings. It equally handles how the study can be helpful to its readers and the community at large. From every indication, data collected for the present research was done in a scientific way and the analysis go in the same light as far as scientificity is concerned, leaving no room for subjectivity.

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APPENDIX