**BACKGROUND**

**Relative Pronoun which (Standard)**
- Starts a relative clause
- Always followed by a gap in the relative clause
- Standard use of which in American English

1. "He is... the announcer, scorekeeper, and straight man to Groucho Marx on You Bet Your Life, which... has begun its 10th TV year this season." (Drake 1960, 277)

**Connective which (Non-Standard)**
- Does not have a gap
- Functions simply as a connector, instead of introducing a relative clause
- The current observed forms include gap-filled, gapless, and verbless

**Gap-filled**
(2) My nickname is "Pan" which I don’t like it so much. (Looke 2007, 72)

**Here**, the gap in the relative clause is filled by the pronoun “it”.

**Gapless**
(3) And she decided to move out which I think she’s crazy. (Looke 2007, 75)

Here, which connects the two independent clauses "And she decided to move out" and "I think she’s crazy." Clearly a different function than relative pronoun which.

**Verbless**
(4) You know we sort of see the men saying you should never treat a female that way, which a female. (Loss 2024, 21)

Here, the phrase following which is simply a noun phrase, not a relative clause or an independent clause. This type of which has only been noted in American English.

**Research Questions**

- Is connective which present in Oklahoma English?
- If so, how does its use in Oklahoma English compare to its use in Northeastern American dialects?

**Why Oklahoma English?**

- Oklahoma is home to the Midland, South, and Western dialects of American English
- Oklahoma’s dialects are very removed from the northeastern dialects
- Oklahoma’s speech network is close-knit and generally closed, therefore it is not a place where linguistic innovation is likely to occur (Milroy and Milroy 1992).
- Unlikely to find linguistic innovation in older male speakers (Labov 2001).

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**RESULTS**

**Oklahoma English Corpus**
- 8 hours 15 minutes of audio
- 85,431 words
- Of the 156 instances of which, 130 (84%) are relative pronoun which, and 15 (10%) are connective which

**NE Corpus which Use**
- 20 different speakers, mostly from OK
- 156 total instances of which (0.18% of total wordcount)

**Table 1: Chi-Square Analysis of which use in NE Corpus vs. OK Corpus**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Corpus</th>
<th>Relative Pronoun</th>
<th>Connective</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NE</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OK</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>145</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>406</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>474</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

X² (2, N = 474) = 2.7217, p = 0.098

According to the chi-square analysis, the results are NOT statistically significant (at p < 0.05). This means that speakers in the NE Corpus and OK Corpus are using the same amount of connective which compared to relative pronoun which.

**Types of Connective which in the Oklahoma Corpus**

Each type of connective which discussed in the introduction occurred in the Oklahoma Corpus. The left chart below shows the distribution of the types of connective which used in the OK Corpus. The right chart shows the distribution in the NE Corpus. While these numbers do not look as similar as the charts above, when they are put into a chi-square analysis, Table 2 below, it shows that the distribution of the types of which used in each corpus is not statistically significant (at p < 0.05).

**OK Corpus Connective which Use**
- Verbless 20%
- Gap-filled 27%
- Gapless 53%

**NE Corpus Connective which Use**
- Verbless 11%
- Gap-filled 15%
- Gapless 74%

**Table 2: Chi-Square Analysis of which use in NE Corpus vs. OK Corpus**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Corpus</th>
<th>Gap-filled</th>
<th>Gapless</th>
<th>Verbless</th>
<th>Totals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NE</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>406</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OK</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>152</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

X² (2, N = 67) = 1.6314, p = 0.44

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**RESULTS cont.**

**Types of Connective which Found in the Oklahoma Corpus**

Below are examples of the different types of connective which that occurred in the OK Corpus. The QR code is a link to an audio file with each example.

**Gap-filled**
(5) So we have the website, which, like you said it’s scissortailsteadingmeats.com.

- Paige Dowdy from Glencoe, OK

**Example (5) has the gap in the relative clause filled by the pronoun “it” referring to the “website.”

**Gapless**
(6) There are examples of sculpture using a variety of materials including what I like to refer to as the “people’s medium,” coroplast or twin-walled plastic, to create the title of “Taliban Hands,” which again, this is an exhibition that is fun, but engages in some pretty serious sociopolitical and economic subjects.

- Jeremiah Davis from OKC, OK

This which functions to connect two independent clauses – a very different function than relative pronoun which.

**Verbless**
(7) It was fabulous BBQ like absolutely delicious BBQ, but the two things I couldn’t get enough of were the sides, because BBQ is all about the sides: smoked cabbage, which oh my gosh, delicious.

- Nathan Gunter from Weatherford, OK

This which precedes neither a relative clause nor an independent clause, but instead precedes an exclamation and an adjective that describes a noun earlier in the sentence.

(8) I don’t know about y'all, but that sounds way better than Peloton deaths, intentionally not funny trans comedians, and whatever was going on with Charlotte that whole time which “eek!”

- Nathan Gunter from Weatherford, OK

This which is particularly exciting because it is not followed by any words at all, but instead is followed by a noise made by the speaker. This which is decidedly not a relative pronoun but is simply connecting the independent clause to a noise of disgust made by the speaker.

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**CONCLUSION**

- Oklahomans are using connective which at the same frequency and in the same way Northeastern American English speakers.
- Perhaps they are using it similarly because its use isn’t conscious enough to speakers or listeners and therefore a speaker’s use of which doesn’t index any social categories or dialect regions (Butler 2006).

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**REFERENCES**


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