

Syntax

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Questionnaire Relative Clauses

1. Student name

Robin Wacanno

2. Student number

11741163

3. Language

Kambera

4. Relative clauses in Kambera

Kambera features only a single strategy when it comes to the formation of relative clauses. An illustration of this strategy is given in example 1

- (1) Na- meti -ka na tau [na- ma=piti=ja na ka.bela=ŋgu]
3SG.NOM die -PRF ART person ART REL=take=3SG.ACC ART machete=1SG.G
'The person that took my machete died already'

(Klamer & Klamer, 1998, p. 75)

When it comes to the verb being either finite or non-finite in relative clauses in Kambera, the former seems to be the case. Since, in both main and relative clauses verbs are not marked for person or number, the verb form used in relative clauses could also be used in main clauses. The verb form in example 1 can be compared with the verb in the main clause featured in example 2; both 'mapitija' and 'manahudanja' lack verb inflection for person and number.

- (2) Mbàda manahu=da=nja=ka na uhu
already cook=3PL.G=3SG.D=PRF ART rice
'They have already cooked the rice'

(Klamer & Klamer, 1998, p. 68)

Inside the relative clause, the relativized NP is not present in any form. As such, one can conclude that inside the relative clause gapping takes place with respects to the relativized NP. In normal Kambera main clauses, both arguments of an intransitive verb are attached to said verb as pronoun clitics (=da and =nja in example 2), whereas in relative clauses, the pronoun clitic which would otherwise have cross referenced the relativized NP is omitted (only =ja in example 1). This means that, like in example 3, intransitive verbs used in relative clauses do not feature any pronoun clitics.

- (3) Na- meti -ka na tau [na ma=hidu]
3SG.NOM die -PRF ART person ART REL=be.sick
'The person who was sick died already'

(Klamer & Klamer, 1998, p. 75)

In order to the existence of relative clauses, a subordinator in the form of a relative marker clitic is attached to the relative clause's verb. In example 3, this relative marker takes the form of the *ma=* clitic. There is however another form the relative marker clitic can take. This form *pa=* is used in example 4. The difference in use of these two clitics is based on the function of the relativized NP. *ma=* is used if the relativized NP has the Subject function and *pa=* is used when the relativized NP would act as a Patient in the main clause.

- (4) Na njara [pa=kei=na]
ART horse REL=buy=3SG.GEN
'The horse that was bought by him'

(Klamer & Klamer, 1998, p. 53)

The position of relative clauses can be categorised as being postnominal. All of the examples present in the grammar (Klamer & Klamer, 1998) exhibited sentences where the relative clause followed the relativized NP. The examples shown above are no exception to this fact.

The NPs which can be relativized in Kambera can have two functions; they should either be a Subject or a Patient. As mentioned previously, relative clauses are marked differently based of these functions. Relative clauses with relativized NPs with the Subject function, like in example 1 are marked with the *ma=* relative marker, whereas, in case the NPs act as Patient like in example 4, the relative clause is marked with *pa=*.

References

Klamer, M. A. F., & Klamer, M. (1998). *A grammar of kambera* (Vol. 18). Walter de Gruyter.