Relative Clause Formation in Manipuri

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Abstract

The paper attempts to explore how a nominalized clause (relative clause) is formed and what it does in a noun phrase (NP). The relative clause can be made by nominalizing the verb of the clause or by using the quotative *-haibə-*. The Manipuri relative clause, like an adjective, modifies a head noun and can either precede or follow the head noun of an NP. Our findings reveal that the relative clause as a modifier can occur in an NP that functions as a subject, object or complement of a sentence. In a certain context understood by both the speaker or writer and hearer or reader, the head noun that is modified by the relative clause can be deleted and in that NP the only remaining constituent has to be the relative clause. An interesting new observation made in our analysis is that the quotative *-haibə-* is mainly used in relative clause formation to retain the quoted statement as it is.

Keywords: Manipuri, relative clause, quotative, noun phrase, complement, modifier.

Introduction

Manipuri is a Tibeto-Burman language that has tonal system. It has two tones i.e. high and low. This is an agglutinating language. Many suffixes can be added to the verb. Different types of sentence formation namely negation, imperative and yes or no question can be made by the suffixation of the respective markers to the verb. Manipuri is a postpositional language which is opposed to the preposition; all the case markers are suffixed to the nouns. Its sentence structure is of verb final i.e. subject-object-verb. But in some complex sentences the object precedes the subject followed by the verb when a relative clause is embedded inside an NP which is the object of that complex sentence. In this language nominalization takes a great role in forming relative clause.

Nominalization refers to the process of forming a noun from some other word-class or derivation of noun phrase from an underlying clause. Nominalization is a process by which various grammatical units (words, phrases, clauses, etc.) are turned into nouns or NPs. The fundamental relativization pattern is same throughout the TB language family: relativization is a subspecies of clausal nominalization. The modifying clause is nominalized, and then stands in either a genitive or an appositive relation to the head noun (DeLancy 2002: 56). In Manipuri, relative clauses are formed by adding the nominalizer *-pə ~ -bə* to the verb of the embedded clause and also by using the quotative *-haibə-* which is the extended meaning of the verb *hai*

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'say' and formed by affixing the nominalizer *-pə ~ -bə* to this verb. Unlike the nominalized relative clause the verb of the clause with quotative **haibə** is a finite verb.

In Manipuri, the finite verbs are attached inflectional markers like aspects, mood and the non-finite verbs are formed by nominalizing *-pə~ -bə* to the verbs. Very often it is practically impossible to decide at once, whether a certain word is meant to be an infinitive or a participle; **mthoŋ-ba** may mean: to see, seeing, or seen; **ze-ba** may mean: to say, saying, or said (Francke 1929:146). Like in Tibetan mentioned above, Manipuri has no difference between the infinitive and participle; **pʰa-bə** may mean: to catch, catching or caught. As a native speaker the data are built up for the present study and the phonemic transcription system (IPA) is used to represent the data in this paper.

Pre- vs. Post-head Position of Relative Clause

Inside an NP the relative clause can occur in the same position of an adjective. The Manipuri adjective can occur before or after the head noun of an NP. Similarly, the relative clause can either precede or follow the head noun of an NP.

1. (a) *[ənoibə]*~MOD~   *[nupa]*~HN~   *ədu*   *sannəri*
        ə-noi-bə   *nupa*   *ədu*   *sannə-ri*
        ATT-fat-NMZ   man   D.DET   play-PROG
        'The fat man is playing.'
    (b) *[nupa]*~HN~   *[ənoibə]*~MOD~   *ədu*   *sannəri*
        nupa   *ə-noi-bə*   *ədu*   *sannə-ri*
        man   ATT-fat-NMZ   D.DET   play-PROG
        'The fat man is playing.'

2. (a) *[nəŋnə*   *ŋəraŋ*   *ləirəkpə]*~MOD~   *[lairiktu]*~HN~   *əi*   *pammi*
        nəŋ-nə   *ŋəraŋ*   *ləi-rək-pə*   *lairik-tu*   *əi*   *pam-i*
        you-NOM   yesterday   buy-DEIC-NMZ   book-DET   I   like-SAM
        'I like the book that you bought yesterday.'
    (b) *[lairik]*~HN~   *[nəŋnə*   *ŋəraŋ*   *ləirəkpədu]*~MOD~   *əi*
        lairik   *nəŋ-nə*   *ŋəraŋ*   *ləi-rək-pə-du*   *əi*
        book   you-NOM   yesterday   buy-DEIC-NMZ-DET   I
        pammi
        pam-i
        like-SAM
        'I like the book that you bought yesterday.'

In 1(a) the adjective **ənoibə** 'fat' modifies the head noun **nupa** 'man'. Here the adjective precedes the head noun but in the case of 1(b), the same adjective follows the head noun. Even though the adjective either precedes or follows the head noun, there is no difference in the meaning of the two NPs; but there is a difference in terms of discourse structure and information flow. In the example 1(a) emphasis is given to the noun **nupa** 'man' whereas in 1(b) the derived noun **ənoibə** 'fat' is emphasised. In the example 2(a) where the relative clause precedes the head noun, emphasis is given to the noun **lairik** 'book' whereas in the example 2(b) emphasis goes to **ləirəkpə** 'being bought' that is the nominalized verb of the relative clause. The emphasis is not

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related to the preposed and postposed relative clause but to the presence of the determiner *-tu ~ -du* which is either to the head noun or to the verb of the relative clause.

In 2(a) the nominalized clause ***nəŋnə ŋəraŋ ləirəkpə*** 'that you bought yesterday' precedes the noun ***lairik*** 'book' that is the head noun of the NP ***nəŋnə ŋəraŋ ləirəkpə lairiktu*** 'the book that you bought yesterday'. Moreover, in the case of 2(b) the relative clause follows the head noun. However, the pattern in 2(a) is more frequently used and that of 2(b) is structurally permitted but it is less used. When the head noun precedes the relative clause, there will be a pause between the two. This pattern is commonly used at the discourse level but there is no difference between the two patterns in terms of meaning.

RCs Marked by -pə ~ -bə

The nominalizer *-pə ~ -bə* is attached to the verb to form derived noun in different constructions. Some of the most frequently used constructions where *-pə ~ -bə* occurs are briefly highlighted here as follows.

(i) *-pə ~ -bə* has to occur with the interrogative suffixes like *-la ~ -ra* in making yes or no question.

(a) *nəŋ   lairik   əsi   parəbəra*
    nəŋ   lairik   əsi   pa-rə-bə-ra
    you   book   this   read-PERF-NMZ-INTR
    'Have you read this book?'

(ii) Derivational suffixes like progressive *-li ~ -ri* and perfective *-lə ~ -rə* can be followed by the nominalizer *-pə ~ -bə*.

(a) *[caribə]*_{MOD}   *[mi]*_{HN}
    ca-ri-bə   *mi*
    eat-PROG-NMZ   person
    'person who is eating'

(b) *[kairəbə]*_{MOD}   *[likli]*_{HN}
    kai-rə-bə   *likli*
    break-PERF-NMZ   glass
    'bottle that has been broken'

(c) *[cadəribə]*_{MOD}   *[nupisiŋ]*_{HN}
    ca-də-ri-bə   *nupi-siŋ*
    eat-NEG-PROG-NMZ   woman-PL
    'women who are not eating'

(iii) It can occur with the copula *-ni* to function as complement to the subject.

(a) *ma   cətpəni*
    ma   cət-pə-ni
    he   go-NMZ-COP
    'He went.'

(iv) In negative constructions also the nominalizer *-pə ~ -bə* can occur to form the complement to the object.

(a) *koireŋnə   lairiktu   padəbəni*
    koireŋ-nə   lairik-tu   pa-də-bə-ni
    Koireng-NOM book-DET   read-NEG-NMZ-COP

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'Koireng did not read the book.'

Generally, the nominalized clause (relative clause) is modifying the noun i.e. it can occur as a modifier in an NP. It can occur in the NPs that are in the positions of subject, object or complement of a sentence. Inside the NP that functions as subject of a sentence, the relative clause modifies the head noun.

3. *[manə*   *pʰukʰibə]*_{MOD}   *[nupadunə]*_{HN}   *əibu*
   ma-nə   *pʰu-kʰə-i-bə*   *nupa-du-nə*   *əi-bu*
   he-NOM   beat-DEF-SAM-NMZ   man-DET-NOM   I-ACC
   ŋakpikʰi
   ŋakpi-kʰə-i
   forgive-DEF-SAM
   'The man whom he beat forgave me.'

In the example (3) ***manə pʰukʰibə nupa*** 'the man whom he beat' is the NP that functions as the subject of the sentence. And in this NP, ***manə pʰukʰibə*** 'whom he beat' is the relative clause that modifies the head noun ***nupa*** 'man'.

4. *[gopalnə*   *purəkpə]*_{MOD}   *[nupiməcadunə]*_{HN}   *isəi*   *əmə*   *səki*
   gopal-nə   *pu-rək-pə*   *nupiməca-du-nə*   *isəi*   *əmə*   *sək-i*
   Gopal-NOM   bring-DEIC-NMZ   girl-DET-NOM   song   one   sing-SAM
   'The girl whom Gopal brought sings a song.'
5. *[ojanə*   *haikʰibə]*_{MOD}   *[wahəisiŋdunə]*_{HN}   *əikʰoibu*
   oja-nə   *hai-kʰə-i-bə*   *wahəi-siŋ-du-nə*   *əikʰoi-bu*
   teacher-NOM   say-DEF-SAM-NMZ   word-PL-DET-NOM   we-ACC
   pelhənkʰi
   pel-hən-kʰə-i
   please-CAUS-DEF-SAM
   'The words that the teacher said pleased us.'

Similarly in the case of (4) and (5) the relative clauses that occur inside the subject position NPs are respectively ***gopalnə purəkpə*** 'whom Gopal brought' that modifies the head noun ***nupiməca*** 'girl' and ***ojanə haikʰibə*** 'that the teacher said' that modifies the head noun ***wahəisiŋ*** 'words'. Thus, it can be concluded that the relative clause can operate as a modifier inside the NP that functions as the subject of a sentence.

Since an NP can occur as an object, the relative clause can operate in that object position NP. Hence, another crucial place where the relative clause can occur as a modifier is an NP that functions as an object of a sentence.

6. *[nəŋnə*   *paribə]*_{MOD}   *[waridu]*_{HN}   *caubənə*
   nəŋ-nə   *pa-ri-bə*   *wari-du*   *caubə-nə*
   you-NOM   read-PROG-NMZ   story-DET   chaoba-NOM

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irəmbəni
i-rəm-bə-ni
write-COMP-NMZ-COP
'Chaoba wrote the story which you read.'

7. *[əinə*   *pambə]*_{MOD} *[kolomdu]*_{HN} *imanə*   *ləigəni*
 əi-nə   *pam-bə*   *kolom-du* *ima-nə* *ləi-gəni*
 I-NOM   like-NMZ   pen-DET   mother-NOM buy-NREAL
 'My mother will buy the pen which I like.'

In the example (6) and (7) the NPs that function as the object of their respective sentences are ***nəŋnə paribə waridu*** 'the story which you read' and ***əinə pambə kolomdu*** 'the pen which I like'. In the case of (6) the relative clause ***nəŋnə paribə*** 'which you read' is modifying the head noun ***wari*** 'story' and an NP functioning as an object of the sentence is formed. Similarly in the case of (7) the head noun ***kolom*** 'pen' in the object position NP is modified by the relative clause ***əinə pambə*** 'which I like'. Thus the NP in the object position is also formed by combining the modifying relative clause and the head noun. In such a way the relative clause can occur in the object position NP.

The relative clause can take place in an NP that functions as a complement of the copulative sentence.

8. *məhak*   *[məjamnə* *pambə]*_{MOD} *[ojani]*_{HN}
 məhak   *məjam-nə* *pam-bə* *oja-ni*
 he   all-NOM   like-NMZ teacher-COP
 'He is a teacher who is liked by all.'
9. *mək^hoi* *[əinə*   *k^həŋbə]*_{MOD} *[satrəsiŋni]*_{HN}
 mək^hoi *əi-nə*   *k^həŋ-bə* *satrə-siŋ-ni*
 they   I-NOM   know-NMZ student-PL-COP
 'They are the students whom I know.'
10. *gopen*   *[mək^hoinə* *t^hajəbə]*_{MOD} *[ləumini]*_{HN}
 gopen   *mək^hoi-nə* *t^hajə-bə* *ləumi-ni*
 Gopen   they-NOM believe-NMZ farmer-COP
 'Gopen is a farmer whom they believe.'

The NPs that function as the complement of the copulative sentence of (8), (9) and (10) are respectively ***məjamnə pambə oja*** 'a teacher who is liked by all', ***əinə k^həŋbə satrəsiŋ*** 'students whom I know' and ***mək^hoinə t^hajəbə ləumi*** 'a farmer whom they believe'. In the case of (8) the relative clause ***məjamnə pambə*** 'who is liked by all' is modifying the head noun ***oja*** 'teacher' and in (9) the head noun ***satrəsiŋ*** 'students' is being modified by the relative clause ***əinə k^həŋbə*** 'whom I know'. Similarly in (10), the relative clause ***mək^hoinə t^hajəbə*** 'whom they believe' is modifying the head noun ***ləumi*** 'farmer'. Thus, the relative clause can operate as a modifier of the head noun of the NP that functions as the complement of the copulative sentence.

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Headless RC

In an NP in which a nominalized clause (relative clause) operates as a modifier, the head noun can be deleted in a particular context understood by both the speaker and the hearer. After the deletion of the head noun, the only remaining constituent in the NP is the relative clause.

11. (a) *[nəŋnə   ŋəraŋ   ləirəkpə]*_{MOD}   *[lairiktu]*_{HN}   *pʰəi*
     nəŋ-nə   ŋəraŋ   ləi-rək-pə   lairik-tu   pʰə-i
     you-NOM   yesterday   buy-DEIC-NMZ   book-DET   good-SAM
     'The book which you bought yesterday is good.'

  (b) *nəŋnə   ŋəraŋ   ləirəkpədu   pʰəi*
     nəŋ-nə   ŋəraŋ   ləi-rək-pə-du   pʰə-i
     you-NOM   yesterday   buy-DEIC-NMZ-DET   good-SAM
     'The one which you bought yesterday is good.'

In 11(a) the subject NP is ***nəŋnə ŋəraŋ ləirəkpə lairiktu*** 'the book which you bought yesterday' in which the relative clause ***nəŋnə ŋəraŋ ləirəkpə*** 'which you bought yesterday' modifies the head noun ***lairik*** 'book'. Then in the case of 11(b) the head noun ***lairik*** 'book' is deleted and the remaining constituent of the NP is the relative clause ***nəŋnə ŋəraŋ ləirəkpədu*** 'which you bought yesterday'. When the head noun is deleted from an NP the determiner ***-tu*** ~ -***du*** having been attached to the head noun is added to the nominalized verb of the relative clause. From the attachment of the determiner to the nominalized verb of the relative clause, it has to be aware of the fact that a head noun is deleted. Deletion of a head noun of the NP is possible only when there is a certain context understood by both the speaker and the hearer. Without having a particular understood context, the head noun deletion is impossible.

Quotative RC Construction

The general way of making a relative clause has already been discussed. Now another way of forming a relative clause has emerged. Another crucial way of making a relative clause is done by using the quotative ***haibə*** i.e. the combination of the verb ***hai*** 'say' and the nominalizer -***bə***, which is the extended meaning of the verb ***hai***. After studying the roles of a nominalized verb and the quotative ***haibə*** in making a relative clause, it has been seen that there is a big difference between the two. By using the quotative ***haibə***, the part of the relative clause that precedes it will remain structurally intact. In one sense the quoted statement that is in the direct speech form will remain as it is and there is no nominalization to the verb of the relative clause whereas in the case of the non-quotative relative clause, the verb of the relative clause will be nominalized by suffixing the nominalizer -***pə*** ~ -***bə*** to it.

12. (a) *[tombənə   pabə]*_{MOD}   *[lairiktu]*_{HN}   *əinə   pʰəŋle*
     tombə-nə   pa-bə   lairik-tu   əi-nə   pʰəŋ-le
     Tomba-NOM   read-NMZ   book-DET   I-NOM   find-PERF
     'I have found the book which Tomba reads.'

  (b) *[tombənə   pai   haibə]*_{MOD}   *[lairiktu]*_{HN}   *əinə*
     tombə-nə   pa-i   haibə   lairik-tu   əi-nə
     Tomba-NOM   read-SAM   quotative   book-DET   I-NOM

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pʰəŋle
pʰəŋ-le
find-PERF
'I have found the book which Tomba reads.'

In the example 12(a) the NP that is in the object position is ***tombənə pabə lairiktu*** 'the book which Tomba reads' and ***tombənə pabə*** 'which Tomba reads' is the relative clause that modifies the head noun ***lairik*** 'book'. The relative clause that is embedded in the NP is formed by adding the nominalizer ***-bə*** to the verb ***pa*** 'read'. This example means that the subject ***əi*** directly knows that the book which is found has been read by ***tomba***. However, in the case of 12(b) the relative clause is made by using the quotative ***haibə*** and the verb of the clause is not nominalized. Now it is clear that the quoted statement ***tombənə pai*** 'Tomba reads' that precedes the quotative ***haibə*** keeps a finite verb. The example 12 (b) means that someone has informed the subject ***əi*** that the book which is found has been read by ***tomba.***

Conclusion

The present study discusses some points about how the relative clause is formed in Manipuri. The relative clause is constructed by adding the nominalizer ***-pə ~ -bə*** to the verb of the clause and that nominalized clause has become a relative clause. In an NP, the relative clause always modifies the head noun. One thing to have been pointed out here is that by using the quotative ***-haibə-*** that keeps the quoted statement intact, a relative clause is formed especially in the case of the direct speech form. In addition, the present study made over here is about the relative clause structure of Manipuri and focuses on what a relative clause does in an NP.

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Abbreviations

ACC	Accusative	MOD	Modifier
ATT	Attributive	NEG	Negative
CAUS	Causative	NMZ	Nominalizer
COMP	Completive	NOM	Nominative
COP	Copula	NREAL	Nonrealised
D.DET	demonstrative determiner	PERF	Perfective
DEF	Definitive	PL	Plural
DEIC	Deictic	PROG	Progressive
DET	Determiner	RC	relative clause
HN	head noun	SAM	simple aspect marker
INTR	Interrogative		

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