THE POSITION AND FUNCTIONS OF RELATIVE CLAUSES IN HAUSA

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Abstract

A relative clause is a clause that is attached to an antecedent by a relative pronoun. Relative pronouns in English include who, which, whom, whose and that. It is an independent clause that gives the reader more information about another noun in a sentence. In Hausa, there are two types of relative pronouns. Type A include wanda/wacce/waxanda- who. It has (AGR features) variation for person, gender and number respectively. Type B has da/who,which, whom, whose and that with no variation for person, number and gender. Generally, there are two types of relative clauses, Restrictive (defining) clause and Non-Restrictive (non–defining) clause. In both types of clauses, the relative pronoun can function as a subject, an object or a possessive pronoun, however, each type has a different function within a sentence. The aim of this paper is to sketch and study the position and functions of relative clause constructions in Hausa based on the notion of construction type.

Key Words: Relative Clause, Restrictive Clause, Nonrestrictive Clause, Antecedent

Introduction

A relative clause is a grammatical term used to introduce a post modifying clause within a noun or NP. In English, relative pronouns include (who, which, that whom, whose), relative adverbs (where, when, why) and zero relative (that). Relative clauses in English are traditionally divided into two types: Restrictive and Nonrestrictive. A restrictive clause defines or limits the meaning of the word it modifies, which is essential to the meaning of a sentence. It gives information that defines the noun. The relative pronoun *that* is used for human and nonhuman, relative *who* for human and *which* for nonhuman .A non- restrictive relative clause (also called an Adjective clause) adds nonessential information to a sentence. In other words, a nonrestrictive (or non–defining) relative clause does not define

or limit the noun or noun phrase (NP) it modifies. It is usually separated from independent clause with commas and can be removed without changing the meaning.

First, let us consider the following examples below:

1.   a) I'd like to buy the book(s) $\begin{Bmatrix} which \\ that \end{Bmatrix}$ *which* you showed me yesterday

       b) This is the professor $\begin{Bmatrix} who \\ whom \\ that \\ \theta \end{Bmatrix}$ you should know

       c) That's the pen $\begin{Bmatrix} which \\ that \end{Bmatrix}$ belongs to me

       d) The men *whom* the witch turned into dogs started barking

(1a-d) shows typical examples of restrictive relative clause. In (1a), there is no number contrast but there is gender contrast for *who* relative pronoun, and *which* for human and nonhuman respectively. In addition, relative pronouns: *who, whom* and *whose* can assign subjective, objective and genitive case respectively. As can be seen in (1d) above, if the wh-relative *whom* is removed, the sentence either makes no sense or can be understood in a different way.

In contrast, non-restrictive relative clause examples can be seen in (2) below:

2.   a) His wife, *who loves suya,* is a nice person

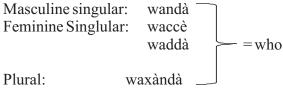   b) We dressed up as beggars, *which was a disguise*

(2a) above tells us some extra information about his wife, that she is a nice person. Likewise, (2b) gives us the reason why we dressed up as beggars. As we can see, restrictive and nonrestrictive clauses may look very similar or even identical except for the commas in writing, such as in *The Quran which I read was given to me by my dad v. The Quran, which I often read, is my favourite book.*

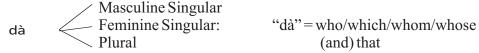**Position and Functions of Relative Clauses in Hausa**
Relative clauses in Hausa have been referred to by various names such as relative pronouns, complementizers, relativisers, or just relative clauses (cf: Galadanci (1969, 1976), Bagari (1976), Adeyanju (1971), Newman (1976), Schuh (1985a), Yalwa (1986), Yusuf (1991) etc).

There are two types of Relative Clauses in Hausa. Type A has variation (AGR features) for person, number and gender while Type B has no variation for person, number or gender. This is illustrated in (3a – b) below:

Type A
Masculine singular: wandà
Feminine Singlular: waccè
                        waddà   ⎫ = who
Plural: waxàndà

Type B
            Masculine Singular
dà   Feminine Singular: "dà" = who/which/whom/whose
            Plural   (and) that

In Type A, MS (masculine singular)*wandà* and FS (feminine singular) *wacce/waddà* take HL tones and relative plural *waxàn dà* takes HLL tone. Type B relative *dà*/ who, which, whom, whose has low tone.

Consider Type A and Type B relative clauses in Hausa below:
3.   a)   Mutumin *wanda/da* yazojiya ya tafi
                (man-detrel-MS he-rel come yesterday he-rel go)
                The man *who* arrived yesterday has left

        b)   Yarinyar *wacce/da* ta dafa abinci tana nan
                (girl-detrel-FS she-rel cook food she-prog here)
                The girl who cooked the food is around

        c)   Dalibai (n) waxanda/da suka ci jarrabawa sun yi murna
                (student-pl-detrel they-rel pass exam they-perf do happy)
                The students who passed the exams were happy

The examples in (3) above show that one can either choose to use Type A or Type B forms of relative markers without change of meaning. However, in most cases, the Type B relative pronoun (da) can function as adjunct of place, time and cause as can be seen in (4) below:
4.   a)   Wannan ne wurin <u>*dà*</u> aka haifeshi
                (this be place relrel-prog born him)
                This is the place <u>where</u> he was born

    b)   Wancan ne lokacin _dà_ ya keraye
               (that be time relrel-prog alive)
               That was the period <u>where</u> he was alive

    c)   Wannan ne dalilin _dà_ yasa ta yi magana
               (this be reason rel it-rel cause she-rel speak)
               This is the reason <u>why</u> she spoke

In examples indicated above, it is clear that relative aspect marking is used in relative clause constructions in Hausa. Perfective and progressive/continuative aspects changes to relative perfective and relative progressive respectively. There is a contrast of vowel and tone marking. For example, perfective takes long vowel –aa and high tone whereas relative perfective takes a short vowel -à and low tone. For clarity, the relative marking is indicated below:

5.   (a)

	Progressive/Continuative	**Completive**
IPSM/F	n-naà (Inaa)	naa
IP.PL.(M/F)	munaà	mun
2PSM	kanaà	kaa
F	kinaà	kin
PL.(M/F)	kunaà	kun
3PSM	yanaà	yaa
F	tanaà	taa
PL.(M/F)	sunaà	sun

(b)   **Relative Marking**

	Relative Completive	**Relative Continuative**
IPSM/F	na	nakee
PL.(M/F)	muka	mukee
2PSM	ka	kakee
F	kika	kikee
PL.(M/F)	kuka	kukee
3PSM	ya	yakee
F	ta	takee
PL.(M/F)	suka	sukee

Consider the use of perfective and progressive aspect marking and the relative clause construction below:

6. a)   Maryam tana son Musa
          (Maryam she –prog love Musa)
          Maryam loves Musa

   b)   Bala yaa san <u>wanda</u> Maryam take so
          (Bala he–perf know who–Rel Maryam she–Rel love)
          Bala knows who Maryam loves

7. a)   Musa ya aauri Maryam
          (Musa he – perf, Marry Maryam)
          Musa Married Maryam

   b)   Binta taa son wacce Musa ya Aura
          (Binta she–perf know who–rel he–rel marry)
          Binta knows who Musa married

8.   Waxan da suka iso jiya sun bar gidan
          (Who-rel they–rel-prog arrive yesterday they-perf leave house-det)
          Those who arrived yesterday left the house

9. (a)   Audu yaa sayi keke
          (Audu he-Perf, buy bicycle)
          Audu bought a bicycle

   (b)   Keken <u>da</u> Audu yasaya
          (bic-ref that–relAudu he–rel buy)
          The bicycle that/which Audu bought

Example (6- 9) above shows the context where relative aspect marking are used in relative clause constructions. One can argue that (6b) can be interpreted as Bala Knows "Specifically" the person who Maryam loves. There is no doubt about it or Bala knows whoever loves Mary. Although, the REL and NONREL may both be perfective, it is the notion of definiteness of an action or event that is considered.

On the other hand, Nonrestrictive relative clause in Hausa thought to be an option to the restrictive clauses, it is an additional information to a clause, as can be seen in (10) below:

10. a)   Gawasi qadaga Ladi, wacce take son aiki a Kano.
          (here letter from Ladi, she-Rel pro she-rel want job in Kano)
           Here is a letter from Ladi, who wants a job in Kano

(b) Motar da Ladi ta saya bara, farace
(car-detrel-pro Ladi she-rel buy last year, white be)
The car which Ladi bought last year, was a white one)

The examples in (10a-b) above show that the nonrestrictive relative clauses are usually set off by commas in writing and can usually detect a speaker's voice.

This suggests that a purely syntactic or semantic analysis cannot adequately treat this phenomenon. It is now clear that other non-language specific factors have to be taken into consideration in order to determine the use of relative marking in Hausa.

Conclusion

A relative clause in Hausa usually modifies a Noun or NP and is introduced by a relative pronoun (wanda, wacce, wxanda and da). Relative clauses are related by their form to an antecedent. They contain an anaphoric element (Relative aspect marking) whose interpretation is determined by the antecedent.

In relative clause constructions in Hausa, we have a contrast between Type A and Type B forms which is not systematically made in the post-nominal modifiers. The relative clause makes a distinction of Tense/Aspect markers, so that, there is a contrast of vowel and tone marking. For example, perfective takes long vowel –aa and high tone whereas relative perfective takes a short vowel -a and low tone.

With regards to the functions of Nonstrictive relative clauses (i.e. Type B), it might be thought as an optional because it is in direct contrast with essential information that appears in restrictive relative clauses.

Conclusively, the paper clearly shows that other nonlinguistic factors have to be taken into consideration in order to determine the use of relative clauses/marking in Hausa.

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