

## **Relative Clauses in Dhimal**

Karnakhar Khatiwada \*

### **Abstract**

*Dhimal is one of the Tibeto-Burman languages spoken by the Dhimals residing originally in the far-eastern Tarai region (i.e., Jhapa, Morang and Sunsari districts) of Nepal. This language is also spoken by a small number of people, known as Mallik, in the Darjeeling district of West Bengal, India. The relative clauses are formed in two ways. The first and widely used strategy is to put the verb of the relative clause in a participial/nominalized form. The participial clauses in Dhimal, as in many other languages, are embedded in the main clause through the process of nominalization. The main strategy employed in Dhimal to recover the case role of the relativized noun is generally referred to as gap strategy. Most of the syntactic arguments such as subject, direct object, indirect object, locative instrumental and comitative NPs may be relativized in Dhimal.*

**Keywords:** Participial, Relativization, Embedded, Gap Strategy, Arguments.

### **1.0 Outline**

Dhimal is one of the Tibeto-Burman languages spoken by the Dhimals residing originally in the far-eastern Tarai region (i.e., Jhapa, Morang and Sunsari districts) of Nepal. According to the census report (2011), the total number of Dhimal is 26, 298 which comprise 0.09% of the total population of Nepal. This language is also spoken by a small number of people, known as Mallik, in the Darjeeling district of West Bengal, India (King, 1994: 121; 2009: 2). However, the number of the speakers and their language is not included in the recent censuses of India.<sup>1</sup> At present, Dhimals, with an ethno-linguistic identity, are confined only in Nepal (Khatiwada 2016). Ethnically, Dhimals prefer to identify themselves as related to Limbus and Rais (Kirats) of eastern hilly region of Nepal. However, linguistically, their form of speech is clustered to either the SAL group of TB languages (Bradley 2002: 84; Epele et al. 2012: 44) or to the Toto language<sup>2</sup> rather than to the Kirati languages spoken in Nepal.<sup>3</sup>

This article deals with the functional and syntactic dimensions of the relative clauses in Dhimal. It is divided into four sections. In section 2, we discuss the functional dimension of relative clauses. Section 3 deals with the types of relative clauses in Dhimal. In section 4, we deal with

---

\* Central Department of Linguistics Tribhuvan University, Kathmandu, Nepal

<sup>1</sup> In the 1961 census of India, Dhimal is mentioned as one of the languages of the Himalayan group and the total number of speakers reported is 11.

<http://www.languageinindia.com/aug2002/indianmothertongues1961aug2002.html>

<sup>2</sup> King (2009: 3) notes "this subgroup, Dhimal-ToTo or Dhimalish, shows apparent similarities to both the Bodic group and to groups spoken in northeastern India."

<sup>3</sup> Bradley (2002: 81) asserts "Nearly all the remaining Tibeto-Burman languages further east in Nepal are part of core Kiranti; the only exception is Dhimal in the south east."

the accessibility of NPs for relativization in Dhimal. In section 5, we present the summary of the findings of this article.

## **2. Functional Dimensions of Relative Clause**

Relative clause is a clause-size modifier embedded in the noun phrase. The relative clause takes part in the grammar of referential coherence, providing either anaphoric or cataphoric clues to the strategies of referential identification.<sup>4</sup> Semantically, a relative clause codes a state or event one of whose participants is co-referent with the head noun modified by the relative clause (Givón 2001b: 176).<sup>5</sup> The relative clause plays a vital role in the grammar of referential coherence, thus is a discourse-pragmatic entity. Functionally, a restrictive relative clause is employed in two distinct conditions: semantic and pragmatic. This condition does not exceed the bounds of the clause within which the relative clause is embedded. Furthermore, this condition applies to both restrictive and non-restrictive relative clauses, and to all types of head nouns, regardless of definiteness or reference. In contrast, pragmatically, the relative clause grounds the referents to a much wider discourse context and also it pertains to the propositional modality, (i.e., the communicative intent) of the relative clause.

## **3. Types of Relative Clauses**

The non-restrictive relative clauses abide by the semantic co-referent condition but not by the pragmatic condition, i.e., the head noun is co-referential with some participant in the state/event coded in the relative clause. But that state/event is not presupposed, but is rather asserted as new information. Givón (2001b: 179) notes "not all languages code non-restrictive clauses." In line with this observation, Dhimal possesses only restrictive types of relative clauses. So, the discussion in this chapter is devoted to the restrictive relative clauses in Dhimal.

In Dhimal, the restrictive relative clauses are formed in two ways. The first and widely used way is to put the verb of the relative clause in a participial/nominalized form. Second, due to the influence of the Indo-Aryan languages, Dhimal also marginally possesses co-relative types of relative clauses (King 2009: 277). In the following sub-section, we will discuss both types of relative clauses in Dhimal.

### **3.1 Nominalized Relative Clauses**

Basically, relative clauses in Dhimal are embedded through the process of nominalization. We call the embedded relative clause, hereafter, the nominalized relative clause. Nominalized relative clauses are subordinate clauses embedded as noun modifiers in the noun phrase. The dependency of the relative clause to the main clause is indicated by the missing argument in the relative clause which is co-referential with the head noun in the main clause (Givón 2001b: 180). Examples in (1) illustrate the nominalized relative clauses in Dhimal.

---

<sup>4</sup>To differentiate between more than one referent, when there is a sort of ambiguity in accessing one, a restrictive relative clause is used (Givón 2005: 104).

<sup>5</sup>Syntactically, a relative clause is a subordinate clause which delimits the reference of an NP by specifying the role of the referent of that NP in the situation described by the relative clause (Andrews 2007b: 206).

- (1) a. *andzi loka djangalai nani hanifi*  
 [andzi lo-ka] djaŋ-galai nani fi-ane-fi  
 yesterday come-NMLZ person-PL today go-PST  
 'The people who came yesterday went today.'
- b. *ka fiika sa barka fi*  
 [ka fi-ka] sa bar-ka fi  
 1SG sit-NMLZ house be.big-NMLZ be  
 'The house I live is big.'

In example (1a), the agentive head noun *djangalai* 'people' is outside the relative clause *andzi loka* 'who came yesterday'. Similarly, in (1b) the locative head noun *sa* 'house' is outside the scope of the relative clause *ka fiika* 'where I live.' In both examples, relative clauses are formed through the process of nominalization of the verb in the relative clause.

Dhimal exhibits no difference in perfective and imperfective relative clauses, i.e., the same morpheme *-ka* is employed irrespective of realis/irrealis modal differences encoded in the main clause. Following are the examples:

- (2) a. *andzi loka djaŋ nani hanifi*  
 andzi lo-ka djaŋ nani fi-ane-fi  
 yesterday come-NMLZ person today go-PST  
 'The person who came yesterday went today.'
- b. *dzumni loka djaŋ*  
 dzumni lo-ka djaŋ  
 tomorrow come-NMLZ person  
*itini hana wa*  
 itini fi-ane-a wa  
 day after tomorrow go-FUT DED  
 'The person who will come tomorrow will/might go day after tomorrow.'

In example (2a), the relative clause *andzi loka* is perfective which is clear from the past tense reference encoded in the main clause. Similarly, in (2b) the time reference of the relative clause is future which is clear from the future tense reference encoded in the main clause.

### 3.2 Co-relative relative clauses

In co-relative structures, the relative clause is not embedded in the noun phrase with the head noun. LaPolla (2008: 809) notes that in Tibeto-Burman languages such structures are found mainly in areas where the languages have close contact with the Indo-Aryan languages, and often involve a relative pronoun borrowed from the Indo-Aryan languages/sources.

In Dhimal, the Indo-Aryan-type relative clause constructions consist of a subordinate clause headed by an indefinite pronoun and the following main clause headed by a definite pronoun (King 2009: 280). Structures of this type are reasonably termed 'co-relative' because they employ interrogative and indefinite pronouns to conjoin the relative clause with the main clause. Co-relative relative clauses, being the later development due to the influence of the Indo-Aryan pattern, are marginally used compared to the internally headed (embedded) relative clauses in Dhimal. Examples in (3) are illustrative of the correlative relative clauses in Dhimal.

- (3) a. *dzisika niŋ<sup>h</sup>e sikar insikaŋ*  
 [dzis-ka niŋ-k<sup>h</sup>e] sikar insika-aŋ

like-NMLZ	get-PRS	hunt	like.that-EMPH
<i>tsumag<sup>h</sup>a ni la ka</i>			
tsuma-g <sup>h</sup> a	ni	la	ka
bring-PST.1SG	PART	MIR	1SG

'I brought whatever I got while hunting.' (TBDFSW\_217)<sup>6</sup>

- b. *dzisikaŋ sotsika wako insikaŋ*  
 [dzisika-aŋ      sotsi-ka]                      wa-ko      insika-aŋ  
 as.like-EMPH      think-NMLZ                      3SG-GEN      like.that-EMPH  
*pugifi pugika te*  
 pugi-fi                      pugi-ka                      te  
 come.true-PST      come.true-NMLZ                      TOP  
 'As she had thought, exactly the same happened to be true.' (TBDFSW\_237)

- c. *dzisikaŋ kelaiko tsan tsamindi uskaŋ idoiko*  
 [dzisikaŋ kelaiko] tsan      tsamindi      uskaŋ      idoiko  
 like      1PL-GEN son      daughter      like      this-GEN  
*tsan tsamindi buŋ doʔk<sup>h</sup>e aŋ m<sup>h</sup>a*  
 tsan                      tsamindi                      bu-ŋ                      doʔ-k<sup>h</sup>e                      aŋ                      m<sup>h</sup>a  
 son                      daughter                      also-EMPH      say-PRS                      REP                      TAG  
 'As our children, like their children (they said), isn't that?' (MMD2MWW\_251)

- d. *ka dzedon sotsig<sup>h</sup>ak<sup>h</sup>a iŋkoŋ niŋfoika ela*  
 [ka                      dzedon]                      sotsi-g<sup>h</sup>a-k<sup>h</sup>a                      iŋko-ŋ                      niŋ-foi-ka                      ela  
 1SG                      whatever                      think-IPFV-PRS.1SG                      that-EMPH                      get-PFV-1SG                      now  
 'Whatever had I thought, might have received the same. (TBDFSW\_594)
- e. *ka dzis-kaŋ sotsig<sup>h</sup>a iŋkoŋ pugifi*  
 [ka                      dzisikaŋ ]                      sotsi-g<sup>h</sup>a                      iŋko-ŋ                      pugi-fi  
 1SG                      as like                      think-PST.1SG                      that-EMPH                      come.true-PST  
 'Whatever I had wished has come to be true.' (TBDFSW\_599)

In examples (3a-e), we see that the co-relative relative clause (enclosed in the square brackets) occur before the main clause they modify. The relative-co-relative pronouns occur in pairs like *dzisika-insika*; *dzisika-iŋko*; *dzedon-iŋkoŋ* etc., in Dhimial co-relative relative clauses.

#### 4. Syntactic Dimensions of Relative Clause

Syntactically, a restrictive relative clause is a subordinate clause embedded as noun modifier in the NP. The dependency of a relative clause is that the relative clause misses one argument which is co-referential with the head noun. Following is an example:

<sup>6</sup>Majority of the examples in this paper are taken from the corpus based on the naturally occurring texts collected for the PhD program on Dhimial morphosyntax. The abbreviations following the examples indicate the speaker, genre type, the dialect and reference of the examples within the texts. The examples without such information are elicited ones.

(4) *sa banaika djaŋ sifi*

[sa	banai-ka	ϕi]	djaŋi	si-fi
house	make-NMLZ	ϕ	person	die-PST

'The person who made house died.'

In example (4) the missing argument is the subject of the relative clause. Because of the strict co-reference condition on relative clauses, the referential identity of the missing argument inside the relative clause is fully recoverable from the head noun itself. But the case-role of the missing argument cannot be likewise recovered, because the head noun bears its case-role, either semantic or grammatical, in the main clause. And the missing coreferential noun may have occupied any case-roles within the relative clause.

There are several parameters by which relative clauses can be typologized. The parameters to be discussed and exemplified here are (i) the position of the relative clauses vis-à-vis its head, (ii) the mode of expression of the relative NP (case recoverability strategy) and (iii) the semantic role of the referent that may be relativized (noun phrase accessibility hierarchy) (Payne, 1997: 326; 2006: 302).

We discuss Dhimial relative clauses in terms of above mentioned typological parameters as follows:

### 3.1 Position of the Occurrence of The Head

The first typological parameter in terms of which relative clauses can vary is the position of the relative clause with respect to its head. Cross-linguistically, relative clauses can be pre-nominal (the clause occurs before the head), post-nominal (the clause occurs after the head), internally headed (the head occurs within the relative clause), or they may be headless (Payne 2006: 303).<sup>7</sup> In Dhimial, as in Bhujel (Regmi 2007: 342), all the relative clauses precede the head noun. They are of three types: externally-headed, internally-headed and headless.

#### a. Externally-headed relative clauses

In externally headed relative clauses, the head is overtly present in the main clause. In Dhimial, the non-finite (nominalized) relative clause occurs before the head noun and the head noun occurs in the main clause. Following are the examples:

(5) a. *sa banaika djaŋ sifi*

[sa	banai-ka]	djaŋ	si-fi
house	make-NMLZ	person	die-PST

'The person who made house died.'

b. *kaɬ<sup>h</sup> dzənmaika bebal tsəndrə surdze dzena wa*

[kaɬ <sup>h</sup>	dzənmai-ka]	bebal	tsəndrə	surdze	dzeŋ-aŋ-	wa
-------------------	-------------	-------	---------	--------	----------	----

wood	bear-NMLZ	woman	moon	sun	bear-FUT-	DED
------	-----------	-------	------	-----	-----------	-----

'The woman giving birth to a wood bear moon and sun?' (TBDFSW\_282)

<sup>7</sup>Subbarao (2012: 265-66) states that the South Asian languages exhibit three distinct patterns in terms of the position of occurrence of the head in a relative clause. They are: a. externally headed, b. the relative-correlative clauses and, c. the internally headed.



leg NEG.be.NMLZ-DAT 2SG how care do-FUT-2  
'How will you care to those who have no legs?' (MMD2MWW\_217)

The locative indirect object may also be headless, as in (9):

- (9) *fiasu fiasu dzagir tsakata fianik<sup>h</sup>e*  
fiasu fiasu dzagir tsa-ka-ta fiane-k<sup>h</sup>e  
who who job eat-NMLZ-LOC go-PRS  
'Who (of you) go to a job holder?' (TBDFSW\_178)

In example (9), the relative clause *dzagir tsakata* 'with one who is a job holder' is headless.

### 3. 2 Mode of Expression of the Relativized NP

The head noun bears its case-roles vis-à-vis the main clause but the relativized noun may realize a variety of case-roles within the clause (Givón 2001).

The case-role of the missing co-referent argument in an embedded relative-clause may be recovered without any morphological provision. That is, the coreferential argument may go missing (deleted) without leaving a trace. Givón (2001b: 184) notes that in recovering the case role of the missing argument under such conditions, the following information is presumably available to the hearer: a. "the lexical-semantic case-frame of the subordinate verb", b. "the lexical identity of the missing argument"; and, c. "the case-roles of the other arguments in the relative clause, which are still present and case-marked in the normal way."

Because of the strict co-reference condition of REL-clauses, the referential identity of the missing argument inside the REL-clause is fully recoverable from the head noun itself. But the case-role of the missing argument cannot be likewise recovered, because the head noun bears its case-role, be it semantic or grammatical, in the main clause.<sup>8</sup> And, the missing co-referent noun may have occupied any case-roles within the REL-clause (Givón 2001b: 181). This potential diversity of roles, coupled with the deletion under co-reference characteristics of relative clause, gives rise, at least in principle, to the case recoverability problem. The syntactic typology of relative clauses may be viewed as the typology of the various strategies employed by languages to solve this problem (Givón 2001b: 182) In Dhimal, the case role of the missing argument is recovered either by the gap-strategy or by the relative pronoun strategy.

#### a. Gap Strategy

The main case recoverability strategy is referred to as the gap strategy. According to this the language simply puts the verb of the relative clause in a particular form and leaves a gap in the relative clause to indicate the position of the head noun.

In common with other Tibeto-Burman languages like Kaike (Regmi 2013: 225) and Bhujel (Regmi 2007: 341), Dhimal does not present the co-referential NP of the embedded clause overtly. To put the point in other way is to say that in externally headed relative clauses, the NP of the embedded clause co-referential to the head noun is not realized overtly, thus leaves a gap. The covert NP recovers its case role from the head noun which is overt in the main clause. The strategy which is used to recover the case of the covert NP in embedded clause is referred to as

---

<sup>8</sup>Payne (2006: 305) states that languages may employ different strategies like leaving a gap, pronoun retention, use of relativizer or relative pronoun to recover the case role of the relativized element.

the gap strategy (Givón 2001b: 184).<sup>9</sup> According to this strategy, a gap occurs in the non-finite (nominalized) embedded relative clauses, as in (10):

- (10) *andzi loka φ djaŋ nani fianefi*  
 [andzi lo-ka φ<sub>ij</sub> djaŋ<sub>i</sub> nani fianefi  
 yesterday come-NMLZ GAP person today go-PST  
 'The person who came yesterday, went today.'

In example (10), the gap for missing argument of the embedded clause is indicated by φ. In Dhimal, the referential identity of the missing argument inside the relative clause is fully recoverable from the head noun itself because the missing argument of the relative clause is obligatorily co-referent with the head noun.

#### b. Relative Pronoun Strategy

The relative pronoun strategy employed in case-recoverability of the relativized NP involves the use of case-marked pronouns, i.e., relative pronouns. (Givón 2001b: 187). In Dhimal, the demonstrative and interrogative pronouns may be employed to relativize an NP, as in (11):

- (11) a. *fiasufiej ka kitab pig<sup>ha</sup> wa naŋko tsan*  
 fiasu-fiej ka kitab pig<sup>ha</sup> wa naŋko tsan  
 who-DAT 1SG book give-PST 3SG 2SG-GEN son  
 'It's to your son whom I gave the book to.'  
 b. *dzedeta d<sup>hol</sup>teŋ ka kathmandu log<sup>ha</sup>*  
 dzedeta d<sup>hol</sup>teŋ ka kathmandu lo-g<sup>ha</sup>  
 which-LOC ride-SEQ 1SG Kathmandu come-1SG.PST  
*ode bəs remka fiŋg<sup>ha</sup>afi*  
 ode bəs remka fiŋg<sup>ha</sup>afi  
 that bus be.good-NMLZ be-IPFV-PST  
 'The bus I took for Kathmandu was good.'

In example (11a), the relative pronoun *fiasu* 'who' in the relative clause is dative case marked whereas in (11b), the relative pronoun *ode* is locative case-marked. The case marking on the relative pronoun help in accessing the semantic role of the NPs, i.e., dative and locative in examples (11a,b) respectively.

#### 4. Accessibility of NPs for Relativization

The accessibility of NPs for relativization is also known as the noun phrase accessibility hierarchy. The problem of accessibility arises because the missing argument inside the relative clause may occupy different semantic roles: they may be subject, direct object or indirect objects/adjuncts.

In Dhimal, most of the semantic roles of the NP inside the relative clause, as in Bhujel (Regmi 2007: 343) and Koyee (Rai 2015: 268), can be relativized. In other words, the relative clause may be embedded in any noun phrase inside the main clause (Givón 2011: 278). Syntactic case roles modified by the relative clause are discussed in the following sub-section.

---

<sup>9</sup>The gap/zero relativization strategy is more likely to be used in languages that use zero anaphoric pronouns, such as Japanese and Chinese (Givón 2001a: 185).



**a. Subject relative clause**

As noted earlier, the relative clauses in Dhimial are marked by the nominalizing suffix *-ka*, and in case of headless relative clause it may be pluralized by the plural suffix *-gelai*. Examples of subject relative clauses are illustrated in (12):

- (12) a. *bai ka te dz<sup>h</sup>araŋ k<sup>h</sup>anteŋ*  
 bai ka te dz<sup>h</sup>araŋ k<sup>h</sup>anteŋ  
 elder.sister 1SG TOP all COMP  
*t<sup>h</sup>orəi dud<sup>h</sup>e amka djaŋ*  
 t<sup>h</sup>or-əi dud<sup>h</sup>e am-ka djaŋ  
 little-EMPH milk drink-NMLZ person  
 'Sister! I'm the one who sucked (mother's) breast least of all.' (TBDFSW\_116)

- b. *sikar g<sup>h</sup>ali hanika djaŋ*  
 [sikar g<sup>h</sup>a-li fianē-ka] djaŋ  
 hunt play-INF go-NMLZ person  
*djaŋ tsumteŋ lok<sup>h</sup>e be*  
 djaŋ tsuma-teŋ lo-k<sup>h</sup>e be  
 person bring-SEQ come-PRS DUB  
 '(It's doubtful that) the person who had gone for hunting came with a person (woman).' (TBDFSW\_215)

In examples (12a, b), we see that the head nouns in subject position are relativized. The head noun of the relative clause may be pluralized by suffixing the plural morpheme *-gelai/galai/lai*, as in (13):

- (13) *delib<sup>h</sup>əri fiika djaŋlai kaŋi kaŋi dzənmaik<sup>h</sup>e*  
 [delib<sup>h</sup>əri fi-ka] djaŋ-gelai kaŋi kaŋi dzənmai-k<sup>h</sup>e  
 delivery be-NMLZ person-PL anywhere wood born-PRS  
 'Do pregnant women give birth to a wood?' (TBDFSW\_267)

In Dhimial, the same nominalizing suffix *-ka* is employed in perfective aspect, as in (13a) above and for potential aspects, as in (14a, b):

- (14) a. *dzumi ita loka djaŋ kaŋko sanaiti*  
 dzumni ita lo-ka djaŋ kaŋko sanaiti  
 tomorrow here come-NMLZ individual 1SG.OBL-GEN friend  
 'The person who will come here tomorrow (is) my friend.'
- b. *ka te barka dzagir tsaka fiabe*  
 ka te bar-ka dzagir tsa-ka fiabe  
 1SG TOP be.big-NMLZ job eat-NMLZ GF  
*djaŋ dop<sup>h</sup>a k<sup>h</sup>iniŋ hanã*  
 djaŋ dop<sup>h</sup>a k<sup>h</sup>iniŋ fianē-ã  
 person with only go-FUT  
 'I will go only with a person who holds an attractive job.' (TBDFSW\_106)

In examples (14a, b), the relative clauses encode the prospective aspect in Dhimial.

**b. Object Relative Clause**

Object relative clauses are those whose missing argument occupies the role of the direct object inside the relative clause (Givón 2011: 280). As in the subject relative clause, the direct object

relative clause is also marked with the nominalizing suffix *-ka* and the subject, if overtly expressed, is marked in genitive, as in (15a, b):

- (15) a. *iŋkoŋ radzkumar-koŋ*  
 [iŋko-ŋ                      radzkumar-ko-ŋ  
 that-EMPH                      prince-GEN-EMPH  
*d<sup>h</sup>olka bajupəŋk<sup>h</sup>i g<sup>h</sup>oða*  
 d<sup>h</sup>ol-    bajupəŋk<sup>h</sup>i              g<sup>h</sup>oða  
 ka]  
 ride-    flying                      horse  
 NMLZ  
 'The flying horse which the prince rides....' (TBDFSW\_360)
- b. *kelaiko d<sup>h</sup>emalaiko tsaka musargalai*  
 kelai-    d<sup>h</sup>emalai-ko              tsa-ka              musar-gelai  
 ko  
 1PL-    Dhimal.PL-GEN              eat-NMLZ              mushroom-PL  
 GEN  
*tsafĩ dz<sup>h</sup>arbariko bam musar*  
 tsafĩ    dz<sup>h</sup>ar-bari-ko              bam              musar  
 IND    jungle-ALL-GEN              Bam              mushroom  
 'The mushroom we Dhimals eat is the wild mushroom called *Bam musar*.'  
 (KRDMPW\_049)

In example (15a), the relativized noun *bajupəŋk<sup>h</sup>i g<sup>h</sup>oða* 'the flying horse' is in object position and the subject *radzkumar* 'prince' is marked with the genitive case marker *-ko*. Similarly, in (15b) the relativized noun *musar-gelai* 'mushroom-PL' is in object position and the subject *d<sup>h</sup>emalai* 'the Dhimals' is marked with the genitive case marker.

### c. Indirect object relative clause

Indirect object relative clause is marked by the same nominalizing suffix *-ka* as in cases of the subject or the direct object relative clauses. The subject of the indirect object relative clause is likewise marked as genitive, as in (16a, b):

- (16) a. *kaŋko paisa pika djaŋfiəŋ kai-k<sup>h</sup>e*  
 kaŋ-ko    paisa    pi-ka                      djaŋ-fiəŋ              kai-k<sup>h</sup>e  
 1SG-    money    give-NMLZ              individual-DAT              call-PRS  
 GEN  
 'S/he calls the person whom I gave/give money to.'
- b. *kā saikəl pi?ka djaŋ dera-b<sup>h</sup>ari fiəne-fi*  
 kâ    saikəl    pi?-ka              djaŋ              dera-b<sup>h</sup>ari              fiəne-fi  
 1SG.OBL    cycle    sell-NMLZ              individual              village-ALL              go-PST  
 'The person I sold the bicycle to went towards the village.'

In example (16a, b), the indirect object *djaŋ* is relativized.

The subject of the indirect object relative clause construction may be in nominative case optionally, as in (17):

- (17) *ka paisa k<sup>h</sup>illi pi?ka djaŋ d<sup>h</sup>a?fi*  
 ka    paisa    k<sup>h</sup>illi    pi?-ka              djaŋ              d<sup>h</sup>a?-fi  
 1SG    money    borrow    give-NMLZ              individual              run-PST

'The person whom I lend money ran away.'

In example (17), the subject *ka* '1SG' of the indirect object relative clause is in nominative case.

**d. Instrument relative clause**

The noun in instrumental case is also accessible to relativization in Dhimal. The nominalized verb preceding the modified instrumental noun is marked with *-ka*, as in (18a, b):

(18) a. *kalau iŋko k<sup>h</sup>orsani bo:ka k<sup>h</sup>undi*

[kalau	iŋko	k <sup>h</sup> orsani	bo:-ka	k <sup>h</sup> undi]
then	that	chilli	grind-NMLZ	mortar
<i>fiik<sup>h</sup>e ru siŋko</i>				
fii-k <sup>h</sup> e	ro	siŋ-ko		
be-PRS	CONR	tree-GEN		

'Then, there was a wooden mortar used to grind pepper.' (TBDFSW\_244)

b. *um ga:teŋ tsaka kar<sup>h</sup>a tsumgil<sup>h</sup>e mako*

[um	ga:-teŋ	t <sup>h</sup> a-ka	kar <sup>h</sup> a]	tsum-gil-k <sup>h</sup> e	ma-ko
rice	cook-SEQ	eat-NMLZ	pan	grab-AMB-PRS	NEG-COP

'(He/she) takes away the cooking pan used to cook rice, isn't it?'

(MMD2MWW\_128)

In example (18a), the instrumental noun *k<sup>h</sup>undi* 'mortar' is relativized. Similarly in (18b), the instrumental noun *kar<sup>h</sup>a* 'pan' is nominalized.

**e. Locative Relative Clause**

The noun in locative case may also be accessible for relativization in Dhimal. Following are the examples:

(19) a. *kelaiko purk<sup>h</sup>ako lamp<sup>h</sup>ako fiika t<sup>h</sup>ame*

kelai-ko	purk <sup>h</sup> a-ko	lamp <sup>h</sup> a-ko	fii-ka	t <sup>h</sup> ame
1PL-GEN	ancestor-GEN	before-GEN	sit-NMLZ	place

*leŋaŋko bu d<sup>h</sup>imaldãdã g<sup>h</sup>osənapatrə pan<sup>h</sup>afi*

leŋaŋko	bu	d <sup>h</sup> imal-dãdã	g <sup>h</sup> osənapatrə	pa-n <sup>h</sup> a-fii
Letang-GEN	also	Dhimal-hill	manifesto	do-1PL-PST

'We declared Dhimaldanda manifesto at Letang, which is the original place of our ancestors.' (RMDLSW\_234)

b. *odoi gund<sup>h</sup>a ta?ka koŋ<sup>h</sup>ataŋ gund<sup>h</sup>a*

odoi	gund <sup>h</sup> a	ta?-ka	koŋ <sup>h</sup> a -ta-ŋ	gund <sup>h</sup> a
that	rice.chaff	keep-NMLZ	room-LOC-EMPH	rice.chaff

*li?ta g<sup>h</sup>usirpifi aŋ tsanfiŋ*

li?ta	g <sup>h</sup> usir-pi-fii	aŋ	tsan-fiŋ
inside	thrust.into-BEN-PST	REP	son-DAT

'(They) thrust the baby into the room where the rice chaff is stocked.'

(TBDFSW\_243)

In example (19a), the locative noun *t<sup>h</sup>ame* 'place' is relativized. Similarly, in (19b) the locative noun *koŋ<sup>h</sup>a* 'room' is relativized.

**f. Possessor Relative Clause**

The possessive/genitive noun may also be relativized in Dhimal. Following are the examples:

(20) a. *iŋko tsəndrə surja dzeŋli k<sup>h</sup>aŋka radzkumariko*

iŋko tsəndrə surja dzeŋ-li kʰaŋ-ka radzkumari-ko  
 that moon sun bear-INF look-NMLZ princess-GEN  
*mi dʰuʔli tomfi aŋ*  
 mi dʰuʔ-li tom-fi aŋ  
 eye Brust-INF be.about.to-PST REP  
 'The eyes of the princess, who wanted to bear moon and sun, were about to burst.'  
 (TBDFSW\_287)

- b. *atʰarə tsu pusuŋ fiika djaŋ*  
 atʰarə tsu pusuŋ fi-ka djaŋ  
 eighteen hand.length hair be-NMLZ individual  
*fiisika wa la*  
 fiisika wa la  
 what.kind DED MIR  
 'What type of a person might be who has got his/her hair as long as  
 eighteen span of (one's) hand?' (MMD2MWW\_206)

In example (20a), the possessor noun *radzkumari* 'the princess', which is followed by the head noun *mi* 'eye', is modified by the relative clause *tsəndrə surja dzeŋli kʰaŋka* 'the one wishing to give birth to moon and son'. In (20b) the head noun possessor *djaŋ* 'person' is modified by the relative clause *atʰarə tsu pusuŋ fiika* 'the one who has got his/her hair as long as eighteen span of (one's) hands.'

**g. Comitative Relative Clause**

The head noun in comitative role may be relativized in Dhimal, as in (21a, b):

- (21) a. *ka te barka dzagir tsaka*  
 ka te bar-ka dzagir tsa-ka  
 1SG TOP be.big-NMLZ job eat-NMLZ  
*djaŋdopʰa kʰiniŋ fiianã*  
 djaŋ-dopʰa kʰiniŋ fiiane-ã  
 person-COM only go-FUT  
 'I will go only with a person who has got an attractive job.' (TBDFSW\_106)

- b. *kunu maili bai doʔfi ka dzʰən*  
 kunu maili bai doʔ-fi ka dzʰən  
 than maili elder.sister say-PST 1SG even  
*barka dzagir tsakata fiianã*  
 bar-ka dzagir tsa-ka-ta fiiane-ã  
 be.big-NMLZ job eat-NMLZ-LOC go-FUT  
 And, second eldest sister said, I will go with even a bigger job holder.'  
 (TBDFSW\_192)

In example (21a), the head noun *djaŋ* 'person', followed by the comitative case marker *dopʰa* 'with' is modified by the relative clause *barka dzagir tsaka* 'the one holding an attractive job'. Similarly in (21b), the headless relative clause is followed by the locative marker *-ta* which functions as the covert comitative head noun.

### 5. Summary

In this paper, we discussed the relative clauses in Dhimal. The relative clauses are formed in two ways. The first and widely used strategy is to put the verb of the relative clause in a participial/nominalized form. The participial clauses in Dhimal, as in many other languages, are embedded in the main clause through the process of nominalization. Nominalized relative clauses are subordinate clauses embedded as noun modifiers in the noun phrase. Secondly, Dhimal employs co-relative type of relative clause similar to that of the Indo-Aryan languages spoken in the area. Co-relative relative clauses are syntactically finite which are formed by employing relative pronouns. All the relative clauses in Dhimal precede their head nouns. They are of three types: externally headed, internally headed and headless. The main strategy employed in Dhimal to recover the case role of the relativized noun is generally referred to as gap strategy. Dhimal relative clauses are, basically, externally headed. However, internally headed and headless relative clauses are found in Dhimal. Most of the syntactic arguments such as subject, direct object, indirect object, locative instrumental and comitative NPs may be relativized in Dhimal.

### ABBREVIATIONS

1	first person
2	second person
3	third person
ABL	ablative
ALL	allative
AMB	ambulative
AND	andative
BEN	benefactive
COL	collective
COMP	comparative marker
CONR	contrastive
COP	copula
DAT	dative
DED	deductive
DU	dual
DUB	dubitative
EMPH	emphatic
FUT	future
GEN	genitive
GF	gap filler
IND	indicative
INF	infinitive
INS	instrumental
IPFV	imperfective
LOC	locative
MIR	mirative
NEG	negative
NMLZ	nominalizer

---



---

OBL	oblique
PFV	perfective
PL	plural
PRS	present
PST	past
REP	reportative
SEQ	sequential
SG	singular
TAG	tag question
TOP	topic

### References

- Andrews, Avery D. 2007b. *Relative Clauses*. In Timothy Shopen, ed. Vol. II, 206-236.
- Beckwith, Christopher I. ed. 2002. *Medieval TB languages PIATS 2000*. BRILL: leiden - boston. Koln
- Bradley, David. 2002. *The Sub-grouping of Tibeto-Burman*. In Christopher I. Beckwith, ed. 73-112.
- Central Bureau of Statistics. 2012. *National Population and Housing Census 2011: National Report*. Kathmandu: Central Bureau of Statistics.
- Eppel, John W.; M. Paul Lewis; Dan Raj Regmi; Yogendra P. Yadava. eds. 2012. *Ethnologue: Languages of Nepal*. Kathmandu: SIL International, Tribhuvan University.
- Givón, T. 2001a. *Syntax: An Introduction*, Vol. I. Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company.
- Givón, T. 2001b. *Syntax: An Introduction*, Vol. II. Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company.
- Givon, T. 2005. *Context as Other Minds: The Pragmatics of Sociality Cognition and Communication*. Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company.
- Givón, T. 2011. *Ute Reference Grammar*. Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company.
- Khatiwada, Karnakhar. 2016. *Dhimal Morphosyntax. PhD dissertation*. Kathmandu: Tribhuvan University. To be cited
- King, John T. 1994. "Picking up Where Hodgson Left off: Further Notes on Dhimal." *Linguistics of the Tibeto-Burman Area* 17:2, 121-32.
- King John T. 2009. *A Grammar of Dhimal*. Leiden Boston: Brill.
- LaPolla, Randy J. 2008. "Relative Clause Structures in the Rawang languages." *Language and Linguistics* 9.4: 797-812.
- Payne, Thomas E. 1997. *Describing Morphosyntax: A Guide for Field Linguists*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Payne, Thomas E. 2006. *Exploring Language Structure: A Student's Guide*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Regmi, Ambika. 2013. *A Grammar of Kaike*. A PhD Dissertation, Tribhuvan University, Nepal.
- Regmi, Dan Raj. 2007. *The Bhujel Language*. A PhD Dissertation, Tribhuvan University, Nepal.
- Regmi, Dan Raj. 2012. *A Grammar of Bhujel*. München: Lincom Europa.

Shopen, Timothy. ed. 2007b. *Language Typology and Syntactic Description: Complex Constructions*, Vol. II. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Subbarao, K.V. 2012. *South Asian Languages: A Syntactic Typology*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

