

Relative Clauses in Tadaksahak

Regula Christiansen and Stephen H. Levinsohn

SIL International

2003

Contents

- 1 General features
 - 1.1 The position of the relative clause with respect to the noun it modifies
 - 1.2 Kinds of relativization strategies
 - 2 Case recoverability strategies
 - 2.1 Subject
 - 2.2 Direct object
 - 2.3 Oblique objects (including indirect objects)
 - 2.4 Possessor
 - 3 Restrictive relative clauses
 - 3.1 The relative pronoun strategy and definite entities
Descriptive attributes
 - 3.2 The gap strategy and indefinite entities
Existentials
ho 'this thing'
ne 'place'
 - 3.3 Headless relative clauses
 - 4 Nonrestrictive relative clauses
 - 5 Left-dislocation of nominal constituents containing relative clauses
 - 6 Summary
- References

Three distinct relativization strategies are used in Tadaksahak: a relative pronoun strategy, a gap strategy, and one that uses the morpheme *sa* (hereafter, the *sa*-strategy). One parameter that distinguishes these strategies is whether the relative clause is restrictive (relative pronoun and gap strategies) or nonrestrictive (*sa*-strategy); this difference is reviewed in section 1. The parameter that usually distinguishes the two restrictive strategies is whether the referent of the head noun is definite (relative pronoun strategy—sec. 3.1) or indefinite (gap strategy—sec. 3.2). Section 4 is devoted to the *sa*-strategy. The paper also discusses which grammatical relations can be relativized by each strategy (sec. 2), and some motivations for left-dislocating nominal constituents that contain relative clauses (sec. 5).

1 General features

This section discusses and exemplifies the position of the relative clause with respect to the noun it modifies (sec. 1.1) and the three relativization strategies that are used in the language (sec. 1.2). First, though, the difference between restrictive and a nonrestrictive relative clauses is reviewed.

A **restrictive** (identifying) relative clause “serves to delimit the potential referents” (Comrie 1989:138). Consider the phrase ‘the bracelet [that is made of silver]’ (see (4); throughout this paper, relative clauses are enclosed in brackets). The relative clause ‘that is made of silver’ is restrictive because it limits the potential referents of ‘the bracelet’ to the silver one. In other words, it identifies which bracelet is the referent.

In contrast, a **nonrestrictive** relative clause “serves merely to give the hearer an added piece of information about an already identified entity, but not to identify that entity” (ibid.). Consider the phrase ‘his mother, [whose name is Aminata]’ (see (7)). The relative clause ‘whose name is Aminata’ is nonrestrictive because it gives additional information about its referent (‘his mother’), who is already identified.

1.1 The position of the relative clause with respect to the noun it modifies

Tadaksahak is an SVO language and, consistent with this, the relative clause follows the head, whatever relativization strategy is used.¹

- (1) Ak a- \emptyset -yimur-kat ayn barar [a χ o- \emptyset -bara Bamakoy]?
 QST 3S-PERF-bring-VEN 3S.GEN child REL-PERF-be.in Bamako
Did he bring back his child who is in Bamako?

Because the relative clause nearly always appears right after the noun it modifies, it is often found in the middle of the main clause.

- (2) A[χ al [a χ o a χ a- \emptyset -may nin ka] a- \emptyset -ben.
 work REL 1S-PERF-have 2S LOC 3S-PERF-be.finished
The work that I have for you is finished.

¹The following abbreviations are used in this paper: ADJZ adjectivizer; ALL allative; BEN benefactive, indirect object; COMPZR complementizer, marker of *sa*-strategy; COM comitative (‘with, and, toward’); DET determiner; DISC discourse marker ‘current centre of attention’; EXCL exclamation; FOC focus marker; FUT future tense; GEN genitive; IMP imperative; IMPF imperfective aspect; INDEF indefinite; LOC spatiotemporal locative; N noun; NEG negative; PASS passive; PERF perfective aspect; PL plural; QST polar question marker; REL relative pronoun; SUBJ subjunctive mood; T thematic pronoun; VEN venitive; 1P, 2P, 3P person plural; 1S, 2S, 3S person singular.

In the following example, two relative clauses follow the head noun.

- (3) Aḡa-∅-guna aʒaʒib [# ∅-da ʃikʃid],
 1S-PERF-see phantom PERF-do fear
 sa [ayn mon huru a-b-da i ka].
 COMPZR 3S.GEN eyes fire 3S-IMPF-do 3P LOC
I saw a phantom that causes fear, in whose eyes fire was burning.

1.2 Kinds of relativization strategies

Three relativization strategies are employed in Tadaksahak: (1) the relative pronoun strategy, (2) the gap strategy (i.e., no marking), and (3) with the *sa*-strategy.

The morpheme *sa* only introduces nonrestrictive relative clauses (provided a specific condition is met); this strategy is treated in section 4. The two other strategies, relative pronoun and gap, encode restrictive relative clauses; they are discussed in section 3.

Examples (4) and (5) illustrate the **relative pronoun** strategy. The pronoun agrees in number with the noun it modifies. The singular form of the pronoun is *aḡo*.

- (4) ʒemi a-∅-suwuk awici [aḡo-∅-da azruf ka].
 blacksmith 3S-PERF-rub bracelet REL-PERF-make silver LOC
The blacksmith rubbed the bracelet that is made of silver.

The plural form of the pronoun is *aḡondo* (or *endaḡo*).²

- (5) Ci na imunaskon [aḡondo-∅-zumbu ʃali daw]?
 who DET camel.riders REL.PL-PERF-go.down Rhali LOC
Who are the camel riders who dismounted at Rhali's (place)?

Example (6) illustrates the **gap** strategy (# denotes the absence of a marker).

- (6) a-∅-gar hamu [# f-keni aykaran daw].
 3S-PERF-find meat IMPF-lie puppies LOC
...she (the lioness) found meat that was lying next to the cubs.

Example (7) is of the *sa*-strategy.

- (7) A-b-ʃiʃken-an ayn nana se, [sa ayn man Aminata].
 3S-IMPF-greet-ALL 3S.GEN mother BEN COMPZR 3S.GEN name Aminata
He greets his mother, whose name is Aminata.

2 Case recoverability strategies

This section considers the grammatical relations that can be relativized by each of the strategies presented in sec. 1.2 (Payne 1997:326).

Keenan and Comrie (1977) observe that any given relative-clause strategy will allow relativization in a continuous segment of the following “Accessibility Hierarchy” of grammatical relations:³

subject > direct object > indirect object > oblique > possessor

²The data containing *aḡondo* is all from Talatayt, an Adaksahak region some 100 km northeast of the central town of Menaka, where the form is *endaḡo*.

³Since Tadaksahak relativizes both intransitive and transitive subjects, we have not followed Fox's (1987) version of the Accessibility Hierarchy.

Our data on the language suggests that the following strategies can be used for the listed grammatical relations (the asterisk * means that this strategy is available):

Table 1. Relativization hierarchy from Keenan and Comrie (1977) with possible strategies

grammatical relation: strategy	subject	object	indirect object	oblique	possessor
relative pronoun	*	*	*	*	
gap	*	*		*location	
sa	*	*			*

Further research is needed to determine whether the discontinuous segments for the gap and *sa*-strategies reflect rules of the language or are due to limitations of the corpus.

The following subsections illustrate the relativization of these grammatical relations for each of the strategies.

2.1 Subject

When a subject is relativized in the **relative pronoun** strategy, the pronoun takes the place of the subject clitic in the relative clause.

- (8) Kuna aɣay bora [aɣo-ø-ɬaw-kat neda]!
 find 1S person REL-PERF-reach-VEN here
Get me the person who arrived here!

The following example uses the **gap** strategy.

- (9) Sa itila aru [# ø-ten i daw] i-te-dini a
 COMPZR each man PERF-arrive 3P LOC 3P-FUT-take 3S
 i-m-da a enda ɬamu.
 3P-SUBJ-make 3S COM slave
Each male who arrived at their (place) was taken to be made a slave.

The following sentence illustrates the *sa*-strategy.

- (10) A-ø-zaw surgay fo [sa itila zaɣri a-te-ŋa imuŋas iʃa].
 3S-PERF-marry woman INDEF COMPZR each day 3S-FUT-eat camel.PL seven
He married a certain woman, who (once they were married) used to eat seven camels a day.

2.2 Direct object

When the direct object is relativized in other Songhay languages, a resumptive pronoun occupies the place of the relativized constituent in the relative clause (Heath 1999:244). No such pronoun is used in Tadakshak. The empty space in the following examples is marked with Ø.

The following example illustrates the **relative pronoun** strategy. Nominal direct objects always follow pronominal indirect objects, so the missing constituent is at the very end of the relative clause.

- (11) Aʃaɣal [aɣo aɣa-ø-may nin ka Ø] a-ø-ben.
 work REL 1S-PERF-have 2S LOC 3S-PERF-be.finished
The work I have for you is finished.

The first relative clause in the following example uses the **gap** strategy.

- (12) Kela aḡa-∅-mo tanfust [# aḡan baba aḡo ʒen-i a-∅-da ∅].
 once 1S-PERF-hear story 1S.GEN father REL be.OLD-ADJZ 3S-PERF-do
Once I heard a story of a (courageous) deed that my grandfather did...

The next example also uses the gap strategy. The locative object of the verb ‘be in’ is not marked with a postposition, and so behaves like a direct object.⁴

- (13) A-∅-sesten a enda edag [# boren i-∅-bara ∅].
 3S-PERF-ask 3S COM place people 3P-PERF-be.in
He asked her for a place (where) people were (living).

The following example uses the **sa**-strategy.

- (14) Maḡamad intaynawt, da aḡay he adi sa [ni-∅-yabuk ∅].
 NAME jackal do 1S thing DET COMPZR 2S-PERF-be.about.to.do
Mohamed jackal, do to me that thing which you were about to do.

If the following example of the *sa*-strategy were in English, the indirect object would be relativized. However, the structure in Tadaksahak indicates that in fact a direct object has been relativized.⁵

- (15) Way na-aḡo, sa [tacidawt a-b-sekna ∅ armeni], a-∅-ci
 woman DET-REL COMPZR small.bird 3S-IMPV-show suffering 3S-PERF-say
The other woman (lit., woman who [was] that), (to) whom the small bird was showing suffering, said...

2.3 Oblique objects (including indirect objects)

Oblique objects are characterized by the presence of a postposition that indicates the relation of the constituent to the verb. When such constituents are relativized, the postposition is fronted. In the relative pronoun strategy, it occurs immediately after the relative pronoun. In the gap strategy, it occurs immediately after the head noun that is modified by the relative clause.

The relative pronoun strategy may be used to relativize indirect objects, locations, times, and manners. The gap strategy has been attested only for the relativization of locations. The *sa*-strategy has not been attested for any oblique object.

Indirect objects (benefactives) seem to be seldom relativized in Tadaksahak, as no examples have been attested in our corpus. The following examples of the relative pronoun strategy are elicited. The postposition *se* that marks the benefactive immediately follows the relative pronoun.

- (16) Aḡa-∅-guna bora [aḡo se a-∅-na taraswoyt].
 1S-PERF-see person REL BEN 3S-PERF-give dress
I saw the person to whom he had given a dress.

The verb *yilkam* ‘follow, guard’ always governs an object marked with *se*.

- (17) Alman [aḡo se a-∅-yilkam] a-∅-wuzuwuz.
 herd REL BEN 3S-PERF-guard 3S-PERF-be.scattered
The herd that he guarded was scattered.

⁴There is a whole class of ‘motion’ verbs of that kind. Several of them appear in this paper and regularly behave like two-argument verbs.

⁵The verb for ‘show’ is causative (*s-ekna* ‘causative-see’) and references to causees (the woman, in this sentence) do not take the postposition that marks indirect objects (see sec. 2.3) unless they are pronominal.

When a **location** is relativized, the appropriate postposition is fronted. In the **relative pronoun** strategy, it occurs immediately after the relative pronoun. The following example illustrates the postposition *ka*.

- (18) A- \emptyset -yed in angu [a γ o ka i- \emptyset -yizda γ].
 3S-PERF-return 3P.GEN place REL LOC 3P-PERF-live
He returned to the(ir) place where they live.

In the **gap** strategy, the locative postposition occurs immediately after the head noun ('place', in example (19)).

- (19) A-f-kaykay har a- \emptyset -guna edag [# ka tahart a- \emptyset -hay].
 3S-IMPf-walk until 3S-PERF-see place LOC lioness 3S-PERF-give.birth
She walked around till she saw a place where a lioness had given birth.

In the following example of the gap strategy, the constituent modified by *ka* presents the source of the water. The head noun ('a sprinkle of rain') is the third and oblique argument of the relative clause ('water entered the dry plains from the sprinkle of rain'). Within the relative clause, 'dry plains' is fronted with a trace in the object position (it is not marked as a locative).⁶

- (20) l- \emptyset -kuna arat n tazara [# ka i γ ar γ aran aryen i- \emptyset -huru i].
 3P-PERF-get thing GEN N:sprinkle LOC dry.plain.PL water 3S-PERF-enter 3S
They got a sprinkle of rain from which the dry plains received water.

In the following example, which contains two relative clauses, the postposition is *enda* 'COM'.

- (21) Wa hinjin afereg [# enda tafan i- \emptyset -bara] [# enda alman i- \emptyset -huru-kat].
 IMP mend hedge COM holes 3P-PERF-be.in COM herd 3P-PERF-enter-VEN
Mend the hedge wherever there are holes, wherever the animals enter.

When a **temporal** is relativized, the relative pronoun strategy is used. The same postposition *ka* as for the locative is used, and occurs immediately after the relative pronoun. The following example contains two relative clauses.

- (22) Za γ ri [a γ o ka ni-sebde*d* i a γ an mo ka],
 day REL LOC 2S-stop 3P 1S.GEN face LOC
 za γ ri [a γ o ayda] a γ a-b-na ana ta γ it
 day REL same 1S-IMPf-give 2S.BEN heifer
The day that you bring them before me, that same day (lit., day that [is] same) I will give you a heifer...

However, temporal relative clauses are sometimes separated from their head noun by one of the following verbs: *da* 'do', *yici* 'pass', and *ṭaw* 'reach'.

- (23) Asa γ iat a- \emptyset -ṭaw [a γ o ka i-f-ten].
 moment 3S-PERF-reach REL LOC 3P-IMPf-arrive
The moment has come when they (normally) arrive.

Manner is expressed by the combination of *enda* 'COM' and *umuk* 'manner'.

⁶See footnote to example (13).

- (24) Aɣ-te-da a enda umuk fo.
 2S-FUT-do 3S COM manner INDEF
I will do it somehow.

When a manner is relativized, the relative pronoun strategy is used, with *enda* immediately after the relative pronoun.

- (25) Bay lam aɣ-se-bay umuk [aɣo enda aɣ-te-da a].
 know EXCL 1S-NEG.IMPF-know manner REL COM 1S-FUT-do 3S
I really don't know how I am going to do it.

2.4 Possessor

The only strategy attested in our texts to relativize possessors uses the morpheme *sa*. This same morpheme is used as a complementizer in complement clauses, and as a topic marker in equative clauses.

In the following example, the subject of the relative clause ('her house'), which occurs in its normal position, contains the possessive pronoun that is correlative with the head noun.

- (26) Man na umuk [aɣo enda] ar-te-guna way [# ø-bara izinan],
 where DET manner REL COM 1P-FUT-see woman PERF-be.in sky
 sa [ayn hugu a-f-kedi tazayant n miya kuku-an]?
 COMPZR 3S.GEN house 3S-IMPF-be.up mast GEN end be.long-ADJZ
How are we going to see the woman being in the sky, whose house is up at the end of a long mast?

The constituent that contains the possessive pronoun which is correlative with the head noun may be fronted. If this happens, then a correlative pronominal trace appears in the relative clause in the normal position for the constituent. In the following example, 'his eyes' is fronted and immediately follows *sa*. The pronominal trace *i* occurs in its normal place, immediately preceding the postposition *ka*.

- (27) Aɣa-ø-guna azaɣib, sa [ayn mon huru a-b-da i ka].
 1S-PERF-see phantom COMPZR 3S.GEN eyes fire 3S-IMPF-do 3P LOC
I saw a phantom, in whose eyes fire was burning.

Contrast the following example, in which the constituent that contains the correlative possessive pronoun occurs in its normal position in the relative clause.

- (28) Aɣa-ø-guna azaɣib [# ø-da]ikjid],
 1S-PERF-see phantom PERF-do fear
 sa [huru a-b-da ayn mon ka]
 COMPZR fire 3S-IMPF-do 3S.GEN eyes LOC
I saw a phantom that caused fear, which had fire in his eyes...

In the following example, the correlative possessive pronoun again occurs in its normal position in the relative clause. This time, though, it does not modify a head noun. Rather, it is the object of 'you wanted' (the relative pronoun immediately following the noun 'story' functions as a determiner in the main clause).

- (29) Aywa, da aɣay tanfust aɣo, sa [ni-ø-baɣa ayn da]!
 well do 1S story REL COMPZR 2S-PERF-want 3S.GEN N:do
Well, tell me that story, (the one) which you wanted to tell!

3 Restrictive relative clauses

Tadaksahak contrasts both with related Songhay languages and with Berber languages in employing two restrictive strategies. Other Songhay languages have a single restrictive strategy, using the relativizer *ka(ŋ)* (Heath 1999:242), while Berber languages use the gap strategy. The existence of two strategies in Tadaksahak reflects the fact that the language does not mark **definiteness** on nominals like other Songhay languages, yet sometimes needs to convey this attribute.

According to Givón (1984:399), definite nominals “have unique referential identity,” whereas speakers code a referential nominal as indefinite “if they think that they are *not* entitled to assume that the hearer can...assign it unique referential identity.” Thus, because hearers can be expected to assign ‘unique referential identity’ to ‘the person who sat on the camel’ (see (30)), the phrase is presented as definite. Conversely, since the addressee of (40) cannot assign unique referential identity to ‘a pond that is ahead of us here’ because he is only now being introduced to it, the phrase is presented as indefinite. Similarly, ‘wherever there are holes’ (see (41)) is presented as indefinite because the hearer cannot assign unique referential identity to the expression.

Definite nominals, as defined above, are almost exclusively relativized in Tadaksahak with the relative pronoun strategy (sec. 3.1). Indefinite nominals tend to be relativized with the gap strategy (sec. 3.2). The understood head of most headless relative clauses is definite, so it is natural that they should use the relative pronoun strategy (sec. 3.3).

3.1 The relative pronoun strategy and definite entities

Typically, when an entity has been previously introduced to a story and so can be assigned unique referential identity, any subsequent reference to it that involves a relative clause involves the relative pronoun strategy. This is illustrated in the following examples.

- (30) Bora [aɣo-f-kedi taɣlamt] a-ø-zumbu-kat.
 person REL-IMPf-be.up camel 3S-PERF-dismount-VEN
The person who sat on the camel dismounted.

- (31) Man imunsuwa [aɣond aɣa-b-furan andi se] aɣa-f-ci ande-b-deraw?
 n o
 where meal.PL REL.PL 1S-IMPf-throw.ALL 2P BEN 1S-IMPf-say 2P-IMPf-share
Where are the foods that I threw to you, telling you to share (them)?

- (32) Asafat a-ø-ɬaw [aɣo ka i-f-ten].
 moment 3S-PERF-reach REL LOC 3P-IMPf-arrive
The moment has come when they normally arrive.

In the following example, the definiteness of ‘the horse which limped’ is enhanced by the presence with the relative pronoun of the determiner for ‘that’.

- (33) A-ø-na a se bari [aɣo senda b-zegedel].
 3S-PERF-give 3S BEN horse REL DET.far IMPf-limp
He gave him that horse which limped.

Descriptive attributes

Adjectives in Tadaksahak are typically derived from stative verbs. When such an adjective modifies a noun, it is usually preceded by the relative pronoun, unless the entity is being introduced to the story (see sec. 3.2). In such constructions, the entity does not have to be definite, as long as its existence has already been established.

In the following example, for instance, ‘a horse of good quality’ is an indefinite but established entity.

- (34) Dini bari [aɣo yifren-an] ni-m-tebbet aɣay ayn tekermuʃit ka anazmay.
 take horse REL be.chosen.ADJZ 2S-SUBJ-hit 1S 3S.GEN hoof LOC needle
Take a horse of good quality and hammer a needle in its hoof for me.

Similarly, ‘big game’ (*lit.*, ‘game that is big’) is an indefinite but established entity.

- (35) datawa anga ɛnda boren i-b-wi iharran enda imudaran
 old.times 3S.T COM people 3P-IMPF-kill lion.PL COM animal.PL
 [aɣondeno ber-anen].
 REL.PL be.big-ADJZ.PL
In olden times, it was with it (a large spear) that people killed lions and (other) big game.

The following two examples of the relative pronoun strategy occur in equative clauses that explain the first evoked term.

- (36) Taradaq hincini [aɣo ʒen-i].
 NAME goat REL be.old-ADJZ
‘Taradaq’ is an old goat.
- (37) Alukukuj cidi [aɣo yibrar-an] [aɣo ka tidi a-ø-baqat].
 Alukukush salt REL be.bad-ADJZ REL LOC dirt 3S-PERF-mix
‘Alukukush’ is salt [in plates] which is of bad (quality) in which dirt is mixed.

3.2 The gap strategy and indefinite entities

This section first considers instances in which the gap strategy is used in connection with reference to an indefinite entity. It then notes two situations in which the gap strategy is used even though the entity is definite.

Typically, when an entity is indefinite, any reference to it that involves a relative clause uses the gap strategy. This is illustrated in the following examples.

- (38) har a-ø-ten tamɣart fo daw [# ø-bara izagazan n gusen].
 till 3S-PERF-arrive old.woman INDEF LOC PERF-be.in wildcat.PL GEN burrow.PL
...until he arrived at an old woman’s who was (lived) in wildcats’ burrows.
- (39) In lenkem a-ne-duwa bora se [# ø-baɣa alfafiyat].
 3P.GEN N:be.behind 3S-NEG.PERF-be.better person BEN PERF-want peace
Following them is not good for somebody who seeks peace.

- (40) Ağa-b-figid ana ağazar fo be [# b-yizar ari neda ka].
 1S-IMPF-wait 2S.BEN pond INDEF on IMPF-be.ahead 1P place.same LOC
I am waiting for you on a pond that is ahead of us here.

- (41) Wa hinjin afereg [# enda tafan i-ø-bara] [# enda alman i-ø-huru-kat].
 IMP mend hedge COM holes 3P-PERF-be.in COM herd 3P-PERF-enter-VEN
Mend the hedge wherever there are holes, wherever the animals enter.

In the first relative clause of the following example, the gap strategy is used because the entity ‘story’ has not previously been introduced, so is indefinite. ‘My grandfather’ can be assigned unique referential identity, in contrast, so the relative pronoun strategy is used to refer to him.

- (42) Kela ağa-ø-mo tanfust [# ağan baba ayo zen-i a-ø-da]
 once 1S-PERF-hear story 1S.GEN father REL be.old-ADJZ 3S-PERF-do
Once I heard a story of a (courageous) deed that my grandfather did...

When a relative clause modifies the quantifier *itila* ‘each’, the gap strategy is used, since the referent cannot be assigned unique referential identity.

- (43) Sa itila aru [# ø-ten i daw] i-te-dini a i-m-da
 COMPZR each man PERF-arrive 3P LOC 3P-FUT-take 3S 3P-SUBJ-make
 a enda tamu.
 3S COM slave
Each man who arrived at their (place) was taken to be made a slave.

When *itila* does not modify a noun, it refers to an indefinite time.

- (44) *itila* [# a-ø-yiktikat ağay] tacidawt ayda a-te-şot-kat
 each 3S-PERF-remember.VEN 1S bird same 3S-FUT-fly-VEN
 ayn wul ka
 3S.GEN heart LOC
...whenever he remembers me, the same bird flies from his heart...

When an **adjective** modifies a head noun and no relative pronoun is used, typically the entity is being introduced to the story. In other words, it is indefinite. This is illustrated in the following examples; both ‘red ribbons’ and ‘a big tree’ are new to the story.

- (45) har zarodi amanokal a-ø-na ayn temgaden se ilanken
 till day.DET chief 3S-PERF-give 3S.GEN daughters BEN ribbons
 [# ciday-enen].
 be.red-ADJZ.PL
...until the day the chief gave his daughters red ribbons (ribbons that were red).

- (46) Tabuğant a-ø-koy tugudu fo [# ber-i] n ciday.
 old.sheep 3S-PERF-go tree INDEF be.big-ADJZ GEN N:under
The old sheep went under a big tree (a tree that was big).

Existentials

Since existentials are used to introduce entities, one would expect any relative clause that occurs in such introductions to use the gap strategy. This is indeed the case with the Tadaksahak existential verbs *bara/ʃi* ‘there is/there is not’,⁷ although the relative clause is typically separated from the head noun by the verb.

- (47) Bora a-ø-ʃi [#- ø-may imuḡas] endanga wiji Idaksahak.
 person 3S-PERF-be.not PERF-own camels if not Idaksahak
There is nobody who has camels if it is not the Idaksahak. (Lit., A person does not exist who owns camels....)

However, the Tamasheq existentials *ʃlay* ‘there is’ and *wurtila* ‘there is not’ are also found in texts. Both terms behave like unanalysed particles in Tadaksahak. They precede the noun whose existence or non-existence they posit. Furthermore, some speakers use the relative pronoun strategy for any relative clause that modifies this noun, even though the referent is indefinite.

- (48) Aḡa-ø-bay sa wurtila amḡus [aḡo-b-yazurag tesseḡaḡan ka]
 1S-PERF-know COMPZR there.is.not camel REL-IMPF-be.free season.kind LOC
I know that there is no camel that is left free during hot season...

ho ‘this thing’

The noun *ho* ‘this thing’ consists of the neutral noun *he* ‘thing’ and the determiner *+o*, so is definite. Nevertheless, it never occurs with the relative pronoun, as the following examples demonstrate.

- (49) A-ne-yider ayn tenna, a-ne-da ho [# a-ø-ci].
 3S-NEG.PERF-hold 3S.GEN promise 3S-NEG.PERF-do thing.DET 3S-PERF-say
He did not keep his promise, he did not do what (lit., the thing that) he said.

- (50) Endar a-ø-bay ho [# ø-bara a se alaxar],
 if 3S-PERF-know thing.DET PERF-be.in 3S BEN next.world
 a-se-da a se he [# yibrar-an].
 3S-NEG.IMPF-do 3S BEN thing be.bad-ADJZ
If she had known what was in the next world for her, she would not have done anything bad to him (her husband).

- (51) Ci na ho [# ni-ø-baḡa]?
 QST DET thing.DET 2S-PERF-want
What do you want? (Lit., What (is) the thing that you want?)

ne ‘place’

The noun *ne* ‘place’ is inherently definite, as is shown by the fact that it cannot be modified by the indefinite adjective *fo*. To be acceptable, *ne* in the following ungrammatical sentence would have to be replaced by a word for ‘place’ like *angu* or *edag*.

- (52) *I-ø-keni ne fo ka.
 3P-PERF-sleep place INDEF LOC
They slept somewhere.

⁷ *bara* is glossed ‘be in’ in this paper.

Like *ho*, *ne* never occurs with a relative pronoun even though its referent is definite.

- (53) Ayn biden ne [# ka i- \emptyset -dumbu anga].
 3S.GEN bones place LOC 3P-PERF-kill 3S.T
Its bones were in the place where they had killed it.

3.3 Headless relative clauses

Headless relative clauses use the relative pronoun strategy, and their referent is usually definite. They most often occur because the context allows the head noun to be omitted. In the following example, for instance, the referent of the understood head noun is specified earlier in the sentence.

- (54) A- \emptyset - τ aw-an in hawyen, a- \emptyset -dini [a γ \emptyset - \emptyset -man hay-an]
 3S-PERF-reach-ALL 3P.GEN cows 3S-PERF-take REL-PERF-be.close birth-ADJZ
He reached their cows, took the one that was pregnant...

In the following example, the headless relative clause relates back to an earlier relative clause whose head is modified by the quantifier *itila* ‘each’ (see sec. 3.2).

- (55) Sa itila aru [# \emptyset -ten i daw] i-te-dini a i-m-da a
 COMPZR each man PERF-arrive 3P LOC 3P-FUT-take 3S 3P-SUBJ-make 3S
 enda tamu.
 COM slave
Each man who arrived at their (place) was taken to be made a slave.

- [A γ \emptyset je ne-te-yiwa γ i ka adawana] a- \emptyset -yaba-kat.
 REL only GEN-FUT-block 3P LOC N:talk 3S-PERF-miss-VEN
Only the one who could outdo them in talking missed (becoming a slave).

In the following sentence, the head noun can be omitted since the verb ‘want’ only takes human agents. The referent of the relative clause is indefinite, even though the relative pronoun strategy is used. However, we noted in sec. 3.2 that, following the existential *wurtila*, some speakers employ the relative pronoun strategy for any relative clauses associated with it.

- (56) Wurtila [a γ \emptyset - \emptyset -ba γ a sa ayn tamu γ sek a-te-na afo se].
 there.is.not REL-PERF-want COMPZR 3S.GEN milking.animal 3S-FUT-give one BEN
There is no one who wants to give his livelihood to someone else.

4 Nonrestrictive relative clauses

The morpheme *sa* is typically used to mark nonrestrictive relative clauses; i.e., clauses that add new information about an already identified entity. Such clauses could stand by themselves as independent clauses, were they not attached to the previous clause by *sa*.

Nonrestrictive relative clauses often occur at the beginning of Tadaksahak stories to give additional information about a major participant. The grammatical relation that is most frequently relativized is the direct object, though the subject of both intransitive and transitive verbs may also be relativized, as may the possessor.

In the first example, the subject of an intransitive clause is relativized, and the relative clause gives additional information about the specific place called Indeliman.

- (57) [Having talked about the different places where the Idaksahak live, the speaker adds as an afterthought:]
 ldeleman daḡ ka sa [i⁸-ø-yagor temeɟdaḡ].
 Indeliman too LOC COMPZR 3P-PERF-be.bigger dwelling.place.PL
(They live) also in Indeliman, which is bigger than the (named) dwelling places.

In the next example, the subject of a transitive clause is relativized. The function of the relative clause is not to identify which woman he married, but to give additional information about her.

- (58) A-ø-zaw surgay fo, sa [itila zaḡri a-te-ŋa imuḡas ija].
 3S-PERF-marry woman INDEF COMPZR each day 3S-FUT-eat camel.PL seven
He married a certain woman, who (once they were married) used to eat seven camels a day.

As noted in sec. 2.2, the relativized constituent in the following example is a direct object, not an indirect one (unlike English). The relative clause introduced with *sa* gives additional information about the woman who has already been identified with a restrictive relative clause.

- (59) Way na-aḡo, sa [tacidawt absekna armeni], a-ø-ci
 woman DET-REL COMPZR small.bird 3S-IMPV.show suffering 3S-PERF-say
The other woman (lit., woman who [was] that), (to) whom the small bird was showing suffering, said...

In the following example, the possessor is relativized. Once again, the relative clause introduced with *sa* gives additional information about the noun to which it relates (the phantom).

- (60) Aḡa-ø-guna aɟaɟib [# ø-da jik|id],
 1S-PERF-see phantom PERF-do fear
 sa [ayn mon huru a-b-da i ka].
 COMPZR 3S.GEN eyes fire 3S-IMPV-do 3P LOC
I saw a phantom that causes fear, in whose eyes fire was burning.

In the following example, the relative clause introduced with *sa* has embedded another relative clause that modifies the quantifier ‘one’ from which it is separated by the negative existential *-ji* (see sec. 3.2.) The relative clause introduced with *sa* gives additional information about the three sons.

- (61) lci aru fo na adi a-ø-may ayn izacenan karad,
 they.said man INDEF DET DET 3S-PERF-own his young.man.PL three
 sa [afo a-ø-ji i [# b-deraw afo enda nana]].
 COMPZR one 3S-PERF-be.not 3P IMPV-share one COM mother
There was once a man, he had three sons, of whom there was not one who had the same mother.

In the next example, in which the subject of a transitive clause is relativized, a thematic pronoun follows *sa*, to direct the hearers’ attention from the subject of the main clause to the young man. The function of the relative clause itself is to give additional information about the young man, not to identify him.

- (62) A-ø-hasi-an izace aḡo sa [anga ne-may tabakart]
 3S-PERF-look-ALL young.man REL COMPZR 3S.T FOC-own ewe
He looked toward the young man, the one who OWNED the ewe...

⁸ *ldeleman* being a plural noun requires a plural subject clitic on the verb.

The final two examples of this section illustrate instances in which the clause introduced with *sa* could not stand by itself, since the direct object is missing (denoted by \emptyset). In both cases, the head is the neutral noun *he*. Such clauses appear to be restrictive.

In the first example, the head noun is indefinite, so the gap strategy might have been expected (compare (50) and (52), in both of which the relativized subject relates to *he*).⁹

- (63) ni-te-muqus enda he fo sa [ni-ne-debet \emptyset].
 2S-FUT-meet COM thing INDEF COMPZR 2S-NEG.PERF-be.able.to.do
... (you do not know, when) you come across anything that you are not able to do.

In the second example, the head noun is definite, so the relative pronoun strategy might have been expected (compare (71) and (72)).

- (64) Maḥamad intaynawt da aḡay he adi sa [ni- \emptyset -yabuk \emptyset].
 Mohamed jackal do 1S thing DET COMPZR 2S-PERF-be.about.to.do
Mohamed jackal, do to me that thing which you were about to do.

We conclude that clauses relativized by *sa* are non-restrictive provided they could stand by themselves were *sa* not present. The precise motivation for relativizing with *sa* when the clause is restrictive is unclear.

5 Left-dislocation of nominal constituents containing relative clauses

This section illustrates occasions when Tadaksahak left-dislocates nominal constituents that contain relative clauses. This happens for a number of reasons. The following reasons are illustrated: because the constituent is complex, because relativization of the possessor is apparently not an option in restrictive relative clauses, and because the speaker wishes to give extra prominence to a focal constituent.

Left-dislocated nominal constituents in Tadaksahak have two characteristics:

1. They are placed at the beginning of a clause or sentence.
2. A correlative pronominal trace occupies the place where the constituent would normally occur.

This is illustrated by the following sentence. First, it begins with a complex nominal constituent containing two relative clauses ‘This man whom he accompanied, whose name is Niels’. Secondly, as the constituent identifies the addressee of the following speech, a correlative pronominal trace (*a*) follows the speech verb and precedes the postposition *se*.

- (65) Aru [aḡo oda enda a-b-hanga],
 man REL DET COM 3S-IMPf-accompany
 sa [ayn man Niles], aḡa- \emptyset -ci a se:
 COMPZR 3S.GEN name Niels 1S-PERF-say 3S BEN
This man whom he accompanied, whose name is Niels, I said to him:

The motivation for left-dislocation in the above sentence is clear: the constituent that identifies the addressee and supplies further information about him is very complex. If normal constituent order had been followed, the result would have been very unwieldy: ‘I said to this man whom he accompanied, whose name is Niels:’!

The complexity of the constituent concerned may also be the motivation for left-dislocation in the next sentence.¹⁰

⁹It is possible that these examples are not natural Tadaksahak, but rather reflect the influence of French or Tamasheq.

¹⁰It is normal in Tadaksahak for the direct object to follow the indirect object. In this particular instance, though, the correlative pronoun (*a*), which is the direct object, precedes the indirect object. This conforms to the cross-

- (66) He [aɣo asah a-b-hinjin] kamil aɣ-te-hinjin a ana.
 thing REL force 3S-IMPF-fix all 1S-FUT-fix 3S 2S.BEN
All that strength can fix, I will fix it for you.

Part of the motivation for left-dislocation in the next two examples may well be the complexity of the constituent concerned. However, the deciding factor is probably that relativization of the possessor is not an option in restrictive relative clauses. This restriction may lead to the left-dislocation of the reference to the possessor, together with the use of the appropriate correlative pronoun in the genitive case.

- (67) Bora [aɣo-b-yiʃɣel hulen], ayn kamben i-f-kerʃiʃin.
 person REL-IMPF-work much 3S.GEN hand.PL 3P-IMPF-be.rough
Somebody who works a lot, his hands are rough.

- (68) He [aɣo-f-tuwaɣra enda Talatayt da] kamil in amanokal Ayuba.
 thing REL-IMPF-PASS.call COM NAME DISC all 3P.GEN chief Ayuba
(as for) The whole region called Talatayt, its (lit., their) chief was Ayuba.

The following example also involves left-dislocation of the reference to the possessor, together with the use of a correlative pronoun in the genitive case. It differs from the previous two examples in that ‘the man that she loves’ is left-dislocated not to the beginning of the sentence, but only to the beginning of its clause (following the subject ‘each one’).

- (69) Wa koy,
 IMP leave
 itila afo aru [aɣo a-ø-baɣa] a-m-da a ayn jinji ka.
 each one man REL 3S-PERF-love 3S-SUBJ-do 3S 3S.GEN neck LOC
Leave, may each one put it (ribbon) around the neck of the man that she loves.

The motivation for a further set of examples of left-dislocation is the speaker’s desire to give extra prominence to the referent concerned. In each instance, the correlative that relates to the left-dislocated constituent is a form of the marked, thematic third person pronoun. The following focus marker shows that the referent of the pronoun is focal.

- (70) Bari [aɣo-ø-may izren] *anga* ne-ø-lellet.
 horse REL-PERF-have endurance 3S.T FOC-PERF-be.noble
A horse that has endurance, it’s THIS ONE that is noble.

- (71) [Having been asked to which clan in particular he belongs, the speaker says: ‘I belong to all the Idaksahak...’]
 meʃin tawʃat aɣo, sa [a-f-tuwena lhanaqatan],
 but clan REL COMPZR 3S-IMPF-PASS.call lhanaqatan
anga ne-ø-may aɣay.
 3S.T FOC-PERF-OWN 1S
...but that clan, the one that is called ‘lhanaqatan’, it’s TO IT that I belong.

- (72) Boren ka he¹¹ [aɣo-ø-may azruf] ingi ne-b-yaray enda anga.
 person.PL LOC thing REL-PERF-have money 3P.T FOC-IMPF-go.toward COM 3S.T
Among the people, those who have (lots of) money, it's THEY who go toward it (where the camels are sold).

6 Summary

Tadaksahak has distinct markers for nonrestrictive and restrictive relative clauses. Nonrestrictive relative clauses are characterized by the presence of the morpheme *sa*, introducing a clause which would otherwise be independent. Two strategies are available for restrictive relative clauses. The relative pronoun strategy is used if the head noun is definite. The gap strategy is mostly used when the head noun is indefinite. However, *ho* 'this thing' and *ne* 'place' do not follow this rule; the relative pronoun strategy is never used with them. Motivations for left-dislocating relative clauses include the complexity of the constituent concerned, the desire to relativize the possessor of a restrictive relative clause, and the desire to give extra prominence to a focal constituent.

References

- Comrie, Bernard. 1989. *Language universals and linguistic typology*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Fox, Barbara A. 1987. The noun phrase accessibility hierarchy revisited. *Language* 63:856–870.
- Gensler, Orin. forthcoming. Adpositional relative clauses and Focus fronting in Songhay and Berber. Eighth Nilo-Saharan Linguistics Colloquium 2001, Hamburg.
- Givón, Talmy. 1984. *Syntax: A functional-typological introduction* (volume 1). Philadelphia: Benjamins.
- Heath, Jeffrey. 1999. *A grammar of Koyraboro (Koroboro) Senni, the Songhay of Gao, Mali*. Köln: Rüdiger Köppe Verlag.
- Keenan, Edward, and Bernard Comrie. 1977. NP accessibility and universal grammar. *Linguistic Inquiry* 8:63–100.
- Payne, Thomas E. 1997. *Describing morphosyntax: A guide for field linguists*. Cambridge: University Press.

¹¹The neutral noun *he* conveys the fact that only a subset of the fronted constituent 'among the people' is the subject of the relative clause.