Relative Constructions in Nyiha

An Investigation of the Syntax, Semantics and Activation Status of Information in Relative Constructions in Nyiha, a Bantu Language of Southwestern Tanzania (M23)

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Abstract

This paper deals with relative constructions in Nyiha, a Bantu language of southwestern Tanzania (M23). It is divided into two parts: first, the syntax and semantics of relativization in Nyiha is discussed. The syntactic and functional possibilities and constraints in the formation of RCs are explored. Some complex constructions are analyzed and special attention is given to the difference between restrictive and non-restrictive relative clauses and to adverbial relative clauses. Second, the activation status of information in relative constructions in eight Nyiha stories is analyzed. Three observations, obtained from the relevant literature, are examined. The first observation is that restrictive relative clauses usually do not contain brand-new information. This observation is shown to be true for Nyiha. The second observation is that, if a restrictive relative clause does contain brand-new information, the head of the relative clause is established information. This is shown to be not true for Nyiha. In the text corpus, when a restrictive relative clause conveys brand-new information, the head of the relative construction is often brand new as well. The third observation examined is that non-restrictive relative clauses usually contain brand-new information. This observation is shown to be true for Nyiha. Finally, the activation status of information in two types of adverbial relative clauses and their position with respect to the main clause is examined. The paper concludes with some recommendations for (Bible) translation and suggestions for further research.
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<tr>
<td>APPL</td>
<td>applicative</td>
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<td>associative</td>
<td>PASS</td>
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<td>augment</td>
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<td>past 1</td>
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<td>CA</td>
<td>common argument</td>
<td>PT2</td>
<td>past 2</td>
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<td>PFV</td>
<td>perfective</td>
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<td>DEM</td>
<td>demonstrative</td>
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<td>distal demonstrative</td>
<td>PROG</td>
<td>progressive</td>
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<td>future 3</td>
<td>PROX</td>
<td>proximal demonstrative</td>
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<td>FV</td>
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<td>RC</td>
<td>relative clause</td>
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<tr>
<td>H</td>
<td>head</td>
<td>REL</td>
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<tr>
<td>HAB</td>
<td>habitual</td>
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<td>NEG</td>
<td>negative</td>
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1 noun class 1 prefix/first person  
1A noun class 1A prefix  
2 noun class 2 prefix/second person  
3 noun class 3 prefix/third person  
4 noun class 4 prefix, etc.
1 Introduction

1.1 Aim of this paper

This paper deals with relative constructions in Nyiha, a Bantu language of southwestern Tanzania. Relative constructions are a topic I frequently discuss with the Nyiha Bible translation team (consisting of two mother tongue translators) I supervise. Apart from issues related to the syntax of relative constructions, one question that often arises is how restrictive and non-restrictive relative clauses (from now on: RCs) are distinguished in Nyiha and how a reader can decide whether to interpret an RC as restrictive or non-restrictive. This paper aims to shed light on a part of the answer to this question.

The paper is divided into two parts. In section 2, I discuss the syntax and semantics of relativization in Nyiha. I explore the syntactic and functional possibilities and constraints in the formation of RCs. I then discuss some differences between restrictive and non-restrictive RCs and analyze a few complex relative constructions. Finally, I give a brief overview of adverbial relative constructions.

In section 3, I turn my attention to the activation status of information in relative constructions. Two issues, brought up in the literature on this topic, will be investigated. First, it has been suggested that the activation status of information is different in restrictive and non-restrictive RCs: non-restrictive RCs typically contain brand-new information, whereas restrictive RCs usually do not (Levinsohn 2007:154, Hollenbach and Watters 1998:section 2.2). If a restrictive relative clause does contain brand-new information, the head of the relative clause is established information (Levinsohn 2007:154). These suggestions are examined for Nyiha in section 3.2. Second, Levinsohn observes that in many languages there is a relation between the activation status of information in a subordinate clause and its position with regard to the main clause. As a rule, pre-nuclear subordinate clauses present information that is already accessible to the reader, while brand-new information may be presented in a post-nuclear subordinate clause (Levinsohn 2007:147). This observation is examined for two types of adverbial RCs in Nyiha in section 3.3.

Section 4 summarizes my findings and discusses their relevance for (Bible) translation.

1.2 Data

The main (and for section 3 only) source of data for my research consisted of eight stories, written by literate Nyiha speakers between 2008 and 2012. For the overview of the syntax of relativization, I also had the translation of several biblical books at my disposal, translated in the period 2007–2012. As well as that, I had two language consultants: Rev. Kassim Mwashilindi (born 1965) and Damas Mwashitete (born 1984), who have both spent most of their life in Nyiha area. Kassim is literate in both Nyiha and Swahili; Damas is literate in Nyiha, Swahili and English. At present they live in Mbeya, a town outside the Nyiha area.

1.3 The Nyiha language

Nyiha is a Bantu language that is spoken by approximately 246,000 people in the Mbozi district in southwest Tanzania (Kriger et al. 2009:ch. 1). It is closely related to the Nyiha language of Zambia and Malawi. Together they are classified as M23 in Guthrie’s (1948) classification of Bantu languages (updated by Maho (2009)1) (but see Krüger et al. (2009) for an evaluation of the actual similarity between the different Nyiha variants). Other languages in the M20 group are Lambya, Malilla, Ndali, Nyamwanga, Safwa and Wanda (Lewis et al. 2013). Lewis et al. (2013) give the following classification

1The reference system for Bantu languages followed in this paper is Guthrie’s (1948) classification of (Narrow) Bantu languages, updated by Maho (2009). Guthrie’s classification consists of 16 zones, labeled with a capital letter, that are subdivided into decades (A10, A20 etc.) Within these decades, individual languages have their own number (A11, A12, etc.). Sometimes individual languages are given an extra digit (e.g. A101).

Some language development in Nyiha was undertaken when the first missionaries came to the Nyiha area in the late 19th and early 20th century. A New Testament was published in 1913 and reprinted in 1965 (but is no longer in use). Other vernacular publications, published in the 20th century, include reading primers, a Christian hymn book and translated agricultural books (Krüger et al. 2009: section 2.5). A detailed study of Nyiha grammar was published by Busse in 1960. In 2003, Nyiha was one of the ten languages that were included in SIL’s Mbeya-Iringa Cluster Project (MICP), a project that aims to do language development and Bible translation in (currently) thirteen languages in southwest Tanzania. Since then, research on Nyiha has entered a new phase. A phonological sketch was written (Eaton 2007), along with a short grammar sketch (in Swahili) (Mfwomi et al. 2005) and a sociolinguistic survey was carried out (Krüger et al. 2009). There is also an unfinished discourse sketch (Lam 2009) and an unfinished grammar sketch (Karels 2011). About fifteen vernacular publications were also produced.

1.4 Previous research

Surprisingly, Busse does not discuss relativization in his Nyiha grammar (1960), although relative constructions do occur in the twenty Nyiha texts that accompany his grammar. The reason for this is not clear. Possibly he did not distinguish between the relative pronoun and the (morphologically similar) copula, although they are tonally different, as will be shown in section 2.2.2.1. Mfwomi et al.’s (2005) Nyiha grammar sketch has an overview of the relative pronominal forms for all the noun classes, together with a few examples of relative constructions. Apart from that, no previous research was done on relativization in Nyiha.

Mtenje (2011) has done some research on relativization in Wandya (Malawi variety, Bantu M23\(^2\)), a language closely related to Nyiha. His research covers mainly prosodic phrasing in relative constructions, a topic only briefly discussed in the present study (but see section 2.2.2). I do not know of any other research that has been done on relativization in Nyiha or one of its close relatives.

2 Syntax and semantics of the relative construction in Nyiha

In this section I discuss the syntax and semantics of the relative construction in Nyiha. Section 2.1 gives a theoretical framework for analyzing relative constructions. Section 2.2 explores the features of the canonical relative construction. In section 2.3 I describe some complex relative constructions and special types of relative constructions. Section 2.4 focuses on the difference between restrictive and non-restrictive relative clauses, and in section 2.5 I discuss some adverbial relative constructions in further detail.

\(^2\)Note that this language variety is not reported in the Ethnologue (2013) to be spoken in Malawi. Mtenje describes (Ci)Wandya as being the same language as Wanda (M21), spoken in Tanzania: ‘Ciwandya is a Bantu language spoken in Chipita district in northern Malawi and in the following areas of Tanzania: Mbeya, Rukwa, Mbozi and Simbawanga (sic). It has been classified by the Ethnologue as belonging to the Nyika-Safwa group in M20 and is alternatively known as Wandia, Iciwandya, Vanda and Kiwanda’ (Mtenje 2011:124). However, the Ethnologue does not report that Wanda is spoken in Malawi as well. Moreover, Walsh and Swilla (2000:12) state explicitly that Wanda and Wandya are not to be confused, as they are different languages. About Wandya they report: ‘The speech of the Wandya, however, who live to the south of the Nyiha in Zambia (and Malawi?), is thought to be dialectally related to Southern Nyiha. ... The Wandya and their language appear to have been largely ignored by both anthropologists and linguists, and we know precious little about them. Their inclusion in the Nyika group of dialects must therefore be treated as provisional’ (Walsh and Swilla 2000:16–17). The Ethnologue does mention a language variety called Wandya, classified as a dialect of the Zambia variety of Nyiha. This is most likely the variety described by Walsh and Swilla and also the variety analyzed by Mtenje, although he confuses it with Wanda. This language variety is not mentioned in Maho’s (2009) update of Guthrie’s classification of Bantu languages. Therefore my classification as M23 is tentative.
2.1 Theoretical framework

Before analyzing the syntactic and semantic features of relative constructions in Nyiha, we need to clarify what definition of RCs is used throughout this paper. In the field of linguistics, two main approaches can be distinguished in this respect. The first approach confines the term ‘relative clause’ to what more generally is called a ‘restrictive RC’. Representatives of this approach are e.g. Andrews (2007) and Comrie and Kuteva (2011). Comrie and Kuteva use the following definition for an RC: “A relative clause is a clause narrowing the potential reference of a referring expression by restricting the reference to those referents of which a particular proposition is true” (Comrie and Kuteva 2011:section 1). An example might help to clarify this definition. Consider the sentence in (1).

(1)  My sister[H] [who lives in Toronto]RC loves knitting.

Since I have more than one sister, the subordinate clause in (1) helps the hearer to identify this specific sister. It is not my sister who lives in Gouda, nor the ones who live in Apeldoorn, Veenendaal or Scherpenzeel. The RC narrows down the potential reference of the noun ‘sister’ and restricts the reference to the particular sister who lives in Toronto: she is the one who loves knitting.

Another approach to RCs includes in its definition not only clauses that restrict the reference of the referring expression, but also clauses that provide further background information about the referring expression. This type of RC is often called a non-restrictive or descriptive RC. Consider the sentence in (2).

(2)  My sister[H], [who lives in Toronto]RC, loves knitting.

In (2), the function of the subordinate clause is to provide further (introductory) information about my sister.

A representative of the approach that includes the non-restrictive RC in its definition of an RC is Dixon (2010). Dixon uses four criteria to define a relative construction.

1. The construction involves a (in his words) main clause and an RC, making up one sentence which consists of a single unit of intonation.
2. The underlying structures of these two clauses must share an argument, which he calls the Common Argument (CA). The CA functions as an argument in both the main clause and the RC, although it does not need to be realized at the surface of either clause.
3. The relative clause functions as a syntactic modifier of the CA in the main clause.
4. The relative clause must have the basic structure of a clause, which means it has a predicate and the core arguments required by that predicate.

In stating, under (3), that the RC functions as a syntactic modifier of the ‘common argument’ in the main clause, Dixon allows at the semantic level for the RC to either restrict the reference of the CA, or to provide further background information for it (Dixon 2010:314).

Dixon’s criteria for defining a relative construction lead us from a semantic to a syntactic characterization of relative constructions. Defining a relative construction syntactically is not an easy endeavor. Cross-linguistically, many different types of relative constructions have been described. De Vries (2002) lists eleven parameters that play a role in distinguishing possible relative constructions. On the basis of these parameters, he singles out four main syntactic types of relative constructions: postnominal, prenominal and circumnominal relatives, and correlatives (pp. 17–20). In a postnominal relative construction, the RC follows the antecedent in the matrix clause (from now on: MC). An example from English is (1), where the RC (‘who … Toronto’) comes after the antecedent (‘my sister’) in the MC. As Nyiha has only postnominal RCs, I do not discuss the other main types in further detail.

One aim of this section is to explore the different syntactic ways in which relative constructions are formed in Nyiha. In doing so, I follow Dixon in including non-restrictive RCs in my analysis of Nyiha relative constructions, as one of the goals of my research is to explore some of the differences between both types of clauses in Nyiha. I also follow Dixon in his assumption that the primary level where the syntax of a language is to be analyzed is the underlying structure. The surface realization of underlying elements is a secondary matter (Dixon 2010:314). Specifically, this means that I follow Dixon in analyzing free relative constructions as ‘canonical’ relative constructions with a non-surfacing head in
the MC (see section 2.2.1.1). In assuming a primary underlying structure of syntax, Dixon’s approach is different from e.g. Van Valin and LaPolla’s Role and Reference Grammar (1997) and Dik’s Functional Grammar (1997, I and II), but in line with other major linguistic theories like Chomsky’s Generative Grammar (1957 etc.). An assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of both approaches is beyond the scope of this research.

A note must be made on terminology. Dixon rightly points out (2010:317) that the term ‘head’, often used for describing the antecedent of an RC, is used in linguistics in a variety of different senses. For this reason, he finds it confusing to use this term for the antecedent of an RC. He introduces the term Common Argument (CA) instead, referring to the pivotal constituent that functions as, in his words, ‘an argument in the MC [main clause, JK] and in the RC’ (p. 314). Thus, the traditionally called ‘head’ of an RC is in Dixon’s approach called the realization of the CA in the main clause. It must be said, though, that Dixon’s terminology is equally confusing, as the term ‘argument’ in linguistics is often used for an obligatory constituent that serves to complete the meaning of a predicate or noun phrase. This is obviously not the way Dixon uses the term: he claims that in many languages this constituent can fulfill any function in the main clause (p. 321). Therefore, in this paper I follow the traditional terminology and use the term ‘head’ to refer to the antecedent of an RC. I use the term ‘relative pronoun’ to refer to, in Dixon’s terms, the realization of the CA in the RC, as this is the only way this pivotal constituent is realized in the RC in Nyiha.

Furthermore, Dixon is not precise enough where he uses the term ‘main clause’ for the clause in which the RC is embedded. As De Vries (2002:14) correctly observes, this clause does not necessarily have to be a main clause—it can also be another subordinate clause. Therefore I follow De Vries in using the term ‘matrix clause’ (MC) instead.

2.2 The canonical relative construction in Nyiha

In this section I discuss the canonical relative construction in Nyiha. An example of a typical relative construction in Nyiha is given in (3).

(3) Isiku limo inZovu[H], [yêREL yâali wa shitengo wa vihanu vwonti ivwa mwi laala]RC, yâvhiisite avhamwavho vhonti.
‘One day Elephant[H], [whoREL was the chief of all wild animals]RC, called all his colleagues together.’ (Uvhushevu 2)

Example (3) meets all four of Dixon’s criteria for a canonical relative construction as mentioned in section 2.1. It contains an MC and an RC (criterion 1), sharing a pivotal constituent (criterion 2): the subject of the MC ‘Elephant’ surfaces also as subject (the relative pronoun) in the RC. Furthermore, the RC functions as a syntactic modifier of the head of the relative construction (criterion 3). It also has the basic structure of a clause, containing a predicate (‘was the chief’) and an argument for this predicate (the subject ‘who’) (criterion 4). Note also that, as mentioned in section 2.1, the RC in Nyiha is always postnominal.

In section 2.2.1 I discuss the head of the relative construction, in section 2.2.2 I focus on the RC, including the relative pronoun.

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3Whenever I discuss a Nyiha example at the syntactical level in this paper, the example is glossed according to the Leipzig glossing rules. Otherwise, only a free translation is given.
4Throughout this paper, I have marked tone on the Nyiha relative pronoun in order to avoid confusion with the copula. See for further discussion section 2.2.2.1. In Nyiha orthography tone is not marked on the relative pronoun.
2.2.1 The head of a relative construction

2.2.1.1 Syntactic patterns

An important question that needs to be asked when investigating relative constructions concerns what type of syntactic categories may function as the head of the relative construction. Nyiha does not seem to have many restrictions on these categories. In this subsection I list the syntactic categories that can serve as the head of the relative construction in Nyiha.

A. Common noun

Most frequently, the head of the relative construction is a common noun (or a noun phrase containing a common noun).

(4) Ahahomaana na vhantu avhinjiH
    a -ha -homaana na a -vha -ntu a -vha -inji
3PL.SBJ -NARR -meet COM AUG -2 -people AUG -2 -many

[vhêREL vháfumile]RC.
vh a -e vha -a -fum -il -e mu i -N -haaya
2 -REL 3PL.SBJ -PT2 -come -PFV -FV 18LOC AUG -9 -town
‘They met with many peopleH [whoREL had come from town]RC.’ (Ishaaho 7)

B. Proper noun

In non-restrictive relative constructions (and in very constrained contexts in restrictive constructions), the head of the construction can also be a proper noun. See for further discussion section 2.4.

(5) Shihamusevha uShaaliH [wêREL áali]
    shi -ha -mu -sevha u -Shaali wu -e a -a -li
7SG.NOM -NARR -3SG.OBJ -choose AUG(1A) -Shaali 1 -REL 3SG -PT2 -be

wu songo]RC.
wu u -songo
1A-COP AUG(1A) -old
‘It chose ShaaliH, [whoREL was the oldest]RC.’ (Ishikunzi 27)

C. Demonstrative pronoun

The head of the relative construction can also be a demonstrative pronoun.

(6) ‘Mutaziyangaje ziilaH [zyêREL]
    mu -ta -zi -yang -ag -e -ila zi e
2PL -NEG -10OBJ -talk -HAB -SUBJ 10 -DIST.DEM 10 -REL

akutuvhombela]RC.
    a -ku -tu -vhomb -el -a
3SG.SBJ -PROG -1PL.OBJ -do -APPL -FV
‘“Don’t talk about those (things)H [thatREL he is doing to us]RC.”’ (Intemo 27)
D. Personal pronoun

In Nyiha, all personal pronouns can function as head of a relative construction. The following examples show the 1SG, 3SG and 2PL personal pronouns in the position of head of a relative construction.

(7) ‘Anavwizye

mu vhudevhuza

a -n -avw -il -e mu u -vhu -dedevhazu

3SG.SBJ -1SG.OBJ -help -PFV -FV 18LOC AUG -14 -weakness

ine\textsuperscript{RC} [nê\textsuperscript{REL} muvhomvi waakwe]\textsuperscript{RC}.

ine na -e u -mu -vhomvi wu -akwe

1SG.PRO 1SG -REL AUG -1 -servant 1 -3SG.POSS

‘...he has helped me in my weakness, \textsuperscript{H} [who\textsuperscript{REL} am his servant]\textsuperscript{RC}.’ (Luke 1:48)

(8) Uweene\textsuperscript{H} [we\textsuperscript{REL} atendiime]

atendiime pa

uweene wu -e a -tend -il -am -e pa

3SG.PRO 3SG -REL 3SG.SBJ -sit -PFV -CONT -FV LOC

shitengo isha vhume\textsuperscript{RC}.

i -shi -tengo i -sha -a u -vh -mw\textsuperscript{RC}.

AUG -7 -chair AUG -7 -ASS AUG -14 -king

we wu Mulungu.

wu -e wu u -mulungu

3SG -COP 1A.COP AUG(1A) -God

‘\textsuperscript{H}He\textsuperscript{H} [who\textsuperscript{REL} is sitting on the throne, is God.]\textsuperscript{RC}.’ (Revelation 4:9)

(9) ‘Ishi, nkuvhavhuza

imwe\textsuperscript{H} [mwe\textsuperscript{REL}]

Ishi in -ku -vha -vhuuzy -a imwe mu -e

Now 1SG.SBJ -PROG -3PL.OBJ -tell -FV 2PL.PRO 2PL -REL

mukutejeelezya]\textsuperscript{RC}.

mu -ku -tejeelezy -a

2PL.SBJ -PROG -listen -FV

‘Now, I tell you (pl)\textsuperscript{H} [who\textsuperscript{REL} listen...]\textsuperscript{RC}.’ (Luke 6:27)

E. Subject/object affix on the verb

It has been claimed that an RC always modifies a noun phrase (see e.g. Andrews 2007:206, Dixon 2010:318, Payne 1997:325, 2006:301). This appears not to be true for Nyiha, as the head of the relative construction can also be a subject or object marker on the verb (10–12) or an adverb (14–15). Examples (10) and (11) show 1SG and 3SG object markers functioning as head of a relative construction. (12) shows a 3SG subject marker functioning as head of a relative construction.

(10) ‘We Mulungu, wan\textsuperscript{H}konzya

vhuli

we u -mulungu u -a -n -konzy -a vhul\textsuperscript{INTERROG}

2SG.VOC AUG(1A) -God 2SG.SBJ -PT1 -1SG.OBJ -do -FV INTERROG

[nê\textsuperscript{REL} mwana waaho]\textsuperscript{RC}?

na -e u -mu -ana wu -aho

1SG -REL AUG -1 -child 1 -2SG.POSS

‘God, what have you done to me\textsuperscript{H}, [who\textsuperscript{REL} am your child]\textsuperscript{RC}?’ (Ishaaho 28)
(11) UMulungu amw\textsuperscript{isite} [we\textsuperscript{ERL}]
U mulungu a -mu -it -il -e wu -e
AUG(1A) God 3SG.SBJ -3SG.OBJ -call -PFV -FV 3SG -REL
mulumbiilizi\textsuperscript{RC}.
\begin{itemize}
\item u -mu -lumbiilizi
\end{itemize}
AUG -1 -preacher

‘God has called him\textsuperscript{H}, [who\textsuperscript{REL} is a preacher]\textsuperscript{RC}.’ (elicited)

(12) Ahavhiiliizyo aha kudaamula
\begin{itemize}
\item a -ha -vhiiliizyo
\item inga haahitaqho a -a -liipo
\item if 12SJ -pt1 -arrive -FV 3SG.SBJ -pt2 -be
\item wu -e a -ha -vha -damusy -ag -a
\item 3SG.SBJ -REL 3SG.SBJ -CONS 3PL.OBJ -wake up -HAB -FV
\end{itemize}

‘When it was time to awake, there was someone\textsuperscript{H} [who\textsuperscript{REL} woke them up]\textsuperscript{RC}.’ (Uvhuntu 28)

Alternatively, these examples can also be analyzed as containing an underlying noun phrase (this construction is often called a ‘headless RC’ or ‘free relative’; see also under G below.). This would also meet the requirement, further discussed in section 2.2.2, that the RC in Nyiha always occurs adjacent to the head in the MC. In this case, (10) would be analyzed as in (13).

(13) ‘We Mulungu, wankonzya vhuli
\begin{itemize}
\item we u -mulungu u -a -n -konzy -a vhuli
\item ine na -e u -mu -ana wu a -aho
\item 1SG.PRO 1SG -REL AUG -1 -child 1 -2SG.POSS
\end{itemize}

‘God, what have you done to me\textsuperscript{H}, [who\textsuperscript{REL} am your child]\textsuperscript{RC}?’ (Ishaaho 28)

F. Adverb

One example was found where the head of the relative construction is a temporal adverb.

(14) Yitakumanyiha lye li\textsuperscript{H} [p\textsuperscript{ERL}]
\begin{itemize}
\item Yi -ta -ku -many -ih -a li -e li pa -e
\item vhalihomaana\textsuperscript{RC}.
\item vha -li -homaan -a
\item 3PL.SBJ -FUT3 -meet -FV
\end{itemize}

‘It is not known when\textsuperscript{H} it is [that\textsuperscript{REL} they will meet]\textsuperscript{RC}.’ (Intemo 59)

Note that in this example the relative pronoun goes into noun class 16, the noun class often used for temporal reference.

If \textit{kumwanya} in (15) is analyzed as an adverb (which is not necessarily the case), then this is another example:
Vhakuvhuha kumwanya[kwêREL] vha -ku -vuh -a kumwanya ku -e
3PL.SBJ -PROG -jump -FV upwards 17 -REL.

shitangafiha[RC].
shi -ta -nga -fih -a
7 -NEG -POT -arrive -FV
‘They are jumping upwards[kwêREL it cannot come]RC,’ (Ishikunzi 60)

Alternatively, ku mwanya can be analyzed as a class 9 noun preceded by the class 17 locative particle.

Vhakuvhuha ku mwanya[kwêREL] vha -ku -vuh -a ku i -N -wanya ku -e
3PL.SBJ -PROG -jump -FV 17-LOC AUG -9 -air 17 -REL.

shitangafiha[RC].
shi -ta -nga -fih -a
7 -NEG -POT -arrive -FV
‘They are jumping upwards[kwêREL it cannot come]RC,’ (Ishikunzi 60)

G. Zero realization
In any of the syntactic categories listed above (with the exception of the 1SG/PL and 2SG/PL personal pronouns and the subject/object affix on the verb), the head of the relative construction does not need to appear at the surface in the MC. If the head does not appear at the surface, the RC occurs following the slot where one would have expected the head to appear and it agrees with the noun class of the non-surfacing head. This type of relative construction is often called a ‘headless RC’ or ‘free relative’. (The glosses for the underlying element in (17) and (18) are tentative.)

Ø [WêREL ali na makutwi[RC]
uweene wu -e a -li na a -ma -kutwi
3SG.PRO 3SG -REL 3SG.SBJ -COP COM AUG -6 -ear
atejeleze
ishiili
a -tejeelezy -e i -shi -ili i -sha -a u -Halulu
3SG.SBJ -listen -SUBJ AUG -7 -story AUG -7 -ASS AUG(1A) -rabbit
‘[Who[wêREL has ears, he should listen to the story of Rabbit]RC.’ (Uvhushevu 1)

(18) Vhahamuvhuuzya Ø [zyêREL] 
 vha- ha -mu -vhuuyu -a izi -enee zi -e
3PL.SBJ -NARR -3SG.OBJ -tell -FV 10 -PRO 10 -REL.

zifumiiye mu nkaaya yiila[RC].
zi -fum -il -il -e mu i -N -haaya yi -ila
10 -come -APPL -PFV -FV 18-LOC AUG -9 -town 9 -DISTDEM
‘They told him [what[zêREL had happened in that town]RC.’ (Ishaaho 7)

2.2.1.2 Possible functions of the head of the RC

Another question that needs to be answered is which functions the head of a relative construction can have in the MC. Dixon (2010:322) suggests that ‘the number of functions possible for the CA in the MC will always be the same as or more (never less) than those available for the CA in the RC. (…) Each of the
functions allowed for the CA in the RC will also be allowed for the CA in the MC.’ The text corpus shows examples of the head of the relative construction functioning as subject, object, indirect or oblique object, possessive modifier and adverbial adjunct in the MC, and the relative pronoun having the same functions in the RC. In this subsection I list the functions the head of a relative construction can have in the MC. In section 2.2.2.2 I focus on the possible functions of the relative pronoun in the RC.

A. Subject
Most often, the head of the relative construction functions as a subject (19) or an object (20) in the MC.

(19) Isiku limo iNzovu[R], [yê[REL] yáali wa shitengo wa vihanu vwonti ivwa mwi laala]RC, yávhiisite avhamwavho vhonti.
   ‘One day Elephant[R], [who[REL] was the chief of all wild animals]RC, called all his colleagues together.’
   (Uvhushevu 2; see also (3))

B. Object
(20) Shihamusevha uShaali[R], [we[REL] áali wu songo]RC.
   ‘It chose Shaali[R], [who[REL] was the oldest]RC.’ (Ishikunzi 27; see also (5))

C. Indirect or oblique object
The prepositional function can be expressed in several ways in Nyiha:
1. The applicative form of a verb.
2. The locative particles ku (unspecific location), pa (specific location) and mu (inside location), the comitative particle na and the particle kwa, which is best analyzed as the locative particle ku together with the associative suffix a. Kwa can carry a range of meanings, including ‘by means of’, ‘from’, ‘for’ and ‘to’.
3. A prepositional phrase, using a locative clitic, a noun and the associative particle. The locative clitic is similar to the locative particle but is realized as a clitic in orthography in order to make the difference with a regular noun phrase clear:
   pa mwanya ‘in heaven’
   pamwanya pa shitengo ‘on the chair’
   pa nsi ‘on earth’
   pansi pa shitengo ‘under the chair’
In all three of these constructions, the oblique object can function as the head of a relative construction. (21) is an example of the head of a relative construction functioning as (indirect) object of the applicative form of a verb. In (22) the head of the relative construction is a locative, and in (23) it is the object of a prepositional phrase.

(21) Ahavhavhuuzya Ø[R] [vê[REL] vhimiliyeyi papiipi nu Pauli]RC kuuti…
   ‘He told those[R] [who[REL] stood close to Paul]RC that…’ (Acts 23:6)

(22) Ahasiivha kukazya umugunda uyo ku vhanji[R] [vê[REL] vhalonololaga amagunda]RC.
   ‘He thought of selling this field to others[R] [who[REL] were looking for fields]RC.’ (UHalulu 6)

(23) Vhahadovhola pamwanya[R] [pê[REL] uYesu áamile]RC.
   ‘They made a hole above[R] [where[REL] Jesus was]RC.’ (Mark 2:4)

D. Possessive modifier
The head of a relative construction can also function as a possessive modifier in the MC.

(24) ‘Uvhuzilo uhwo, vhwa vhanjui[R] [vê[REL] vhahvhiishilwa nziila]RC,
   ‘This position belongs to people[R] [lit. ‘is of people’] [who[REL] have been prepared]RC.’ (Mark 10:40)
E. Adverbial adjunct
Finally, the head of a relative construction sometimes functions as an adverbial adjunct in the MC.

   ‘The first time’ [whenREL they told Yapinyila that death had occurred]RC… it did not touch his heart.’
   (Ishaaho 31)

It appears that when the head of the relative construction is an adverbial adjunct, the relative
pronoun always has an adverbial function in the RC as well. It is not clear to me whether this observation
applies to Nyiha only, or holds true cross-linguistically.

2.2.2 The relative clause (RC)

Each language has its own way of marking an RC. Dixon (2010:338) lists six features that can be found
cross-linguistically as markers of an RC.

• By one intonation contour across the relative clause construction
• By the position of the RC within the MC
• By prosodic means
• By an inflection on the verb of the RC
• By a relative clause marker
• By a relative pronoun.

Of these six features, four are found in Nyiha:

• Intonation. A restrictive RC in Nyiha always comprises one intonational unit. Non-restrictive RCs
  have a prosodic phrase boundary following the head of the relative construction. See for further
discussion section 2.4.
• Position. The RC in Nyiha immediately follows the head of the relative construction in the MC when
  this head is an independent word. If the head gets a null realization in the MC, the RC still occurs at
  the place where the head would have occurred in the MC. If the head is a subject or object marker
  on a verb in the MC, the RC follows the verb phrase.
• Relative clause marker. Most importantly, Nyiha marks its relative constructions with a freestanding
  relative pronoun at the beginning of the RC.
• Prosodic means. In Wandya (Malawi variety, Bantu M20) (Mtenje 2011) and Bemba (Zambia, Bantu
  M40) (Kula 2007), two languages closely related to Nyiha, prosodic means like long vowels and
  contour tones play a role in marking the right edge of the RC. I have not further investigated this
  aspect in my research. Furthermore, as the only difference between the relative pronoun and the
  (emphatic) copula is the tone pattern, in some contexts this tone pattern might play a role in
  marking the RC. I come back to the difference between the relative pronoun and the copula in
  section 2.2.2.1.

In the rest of this section, I discuss the morphological aspects of the relative pronoun (2.2.2.1) and
the possible functions of the relative pronoun in the RC (2.2.2.2).

2.2.2.1 Morphological aspects of the relative pronoun

In this section I discuss morphological aspects of the Nyiha relative pronoun. In Nyiha, the relative
pronoun is analyzed as a separate morphological word, consisting of a long vowel [e] that carries a high
falling tone and is preceded by a noun class marker. The relative pronoun agrees in noun class with the
head of the relative construction in the MC. Since noun classes in Nyiha also specify number, this noun
class agreement includes agreement in number between the relative pronoun and the head of the
construction in the MC.
In (27) below, the relative pronoun is predicated by a noun from a different noun class than the pronoun itself. The relative pronoun is still in agreement with the head of the construction in the MC. In actual speech, Nyiha speakers might change the noun class for the relative pronoun in these sentences and have it agree with the predicate in the RC, as in (28). This is considered to be less natural.

(27) Áali na vhavhomba mbombo
   a -a -li na a -vha -vhomba i -N -vhombo
   3SG.SBJ -PT2 -be COM AUG -2 -worker AUG -9 -work

   avhinjiH, [vhéREL utangavhavaazya]RC.
   a -vha -inji vha -e u -ta -nga -vha -vhaazy -a
   AUG -2 -many 2 -REL 2SG.SBJ -NEG -POT -3PL.OBJ -count -FV

   'He had many workersH, [whoREL you would not be able to count]RC.' (Uvhuntu 12)

   In (27) below, the relative pronoun is predicated by a noun from a different noun class than the pronoun itself. The relative pronoun is still in agreement with the head of the construction in the MC. In actual speech, Nyiha speakers might change the noun class for the relative pronoun in these sentences and have it agree with the predicate in the RC, as in (28). This is considered to be less natural.

(28) Avhamwensiizye avhantu avha
   a -vha -mwel -il -izy -e a -vha -ntu a -vha -a
   3SG.SBJ -3PL.OBJ -drink -PFV -CAUS -FV AUG -2 -person AUG -2-ASS 18LOC

   mu nsi zyonti ipele ihaliH
   mu i -N -nsi zi -onti i -li -pele i -li -hali
   AUG -10 -country 10 -all AUG -5 -wine AUG -5 -strong

   [lyéREL vhwe vhushalaati vhwakwe]RC.
   li -e vhu -e u -vhu -shalaati vhu -akwe
   5 -REL 14 -COP AUG -14 -adultery 14 -3SG.POSS

   'She made people from all nations drink strong wineH, [whichREL is her adultery]RC.' (Revelation 14:8)

If the head of the relative construction is a personal pronoun, the relative pronoun agrees with this pronoun in person and number.
than a bound morpheme that attaches to the main verb of the RC, is that other words can come between the relative pronoun and the main verb. This is not described in Dixon (2010:344–348).

(32) Ine
ne
Yusu
1SG.PRO 1SG.

ntinzile kutumushilwa.
in
1SG.SBJ
-NEG
-1
-serve
-FV

15

Serve 15th century.

'the Lord had spoken to us the word has risen (elicited)'

(33) Ahamupanjila
zyonu
a
3SG.SBJ
-NARR
-3SG.OBJ
-tell
-APPL
-FV

10

Tell a tale of 10.

uHalulu amuvhombeeye.
u
AUG(1A)

-Halulu a -mu -vhombe -il -il -e

And he explained to him everything that Rabbit had done to him (elicited)

(34) 'Nkakumbuka
liila
in
1SG.SBJ
-NARR
-
-remember
-FV

AUG

5

Remember word 5, 5, 5.

uMwene átuvhuuziizye.
u
AUG(1A)

-Lord 3SG.OBJ
-PT2

-1PL.OBJ
-tell
-APPL
-FV

CAUS
-FV

"And I remembered the word that the Lord had spoken to us" (elicited)
If the relative pronoun functions as the subject of the RC, no other words can come between the relative pronoun and the predicate. This is due to the general rule in Nyiha syntax that if a sentence has SVO order, nothing can come between subject and predicate. Further discussion of Nyiha word order is beyond the scope of this research.

As mentioned before, the long vowel in the relative pronoun carries a high falling tone. As such the relative pronoun is different from the copula, which is morphologically similar but carrying a low tone. See examples (35)–(37).

(35) 

Ine ne YesuH, [nêREL Mwana wa Mulungu]BC.

1SG.PRO 1SG -COP AUG(1A) -Jesus 1SG -REL 1A -Son AUG -1 -ASS AUG(1A) -God

'I am JesusH, [whoREL is the Son of God]BC.' (elicited)

Note that in (35) and (36) it is only the tonal pattern that shows the difference between the copula and the relative pronoun and, according to Nyiha speakers, especially in (35) the copula and relative pronoun could easily be exchanged, leading to the utterance in (37).

(37) 

Ine ne YesuH, [nêREL nzyusile]RC.

1SG.PRO 1SG -COP AUG(1A) -Jesus 1SG -REL 1A -Son AUG -1 -ASS AUG(1A) -God

'I am JesusH, [whoREL has risen]RC.' (elicited; see also (31))

Apart from sentences like (37), there are hardly any environments in natural speech where the copula and the relative pronoun are interchangeable.

2.2.2.2 Possible functions of the relative pronoun in the RC

As mentioned in section 2.2.1.2, the relative pronoun can have the same functions in the RC as the head of the relative construction can have in the MC. This is in line with Dixon’s observation that ‘the number of functions possible for the CA in the MC will always be the same as or more (never less) than those available for the CA in the RC. (…) Each of the functions allowed for the CA in the RC will also be allowed for the CA in the MC.’ (2010:322)

The following examples show the functions the relative pronoun can have in the RC.

A. Subject

(38) Ahalola shintu sha vhweeleleH, [shêREL shihondeeye kufumila ahavhaliilizyo honti]BC.

‘He thought it was a normal thingH, [thatREL can always happen]BC.’ (Ishaaho 8)

B. Object

(39) Imeza, ivitengo ni vintu ivwinjiH [vweREL mukuvilola]RC, vikufuma ku luho lwane.’

‘The table, chairs and many other thingsH [thatREL you see]RC, come from my tribe.’ (Intemo 23)

C. Indirect or oblique object

In section 2.2.1.2, I listed three possible ways of expressing the prepositional function in Nyiha. The relative pronoun can function as an oblique object in all three of these categories, although in different ways. Therefore I discuss them separately.
1. Oblique object of the applicative form of a verb. The following examples show the relative pronoun functioning as the oblique object of the applicative form of a verb. In (40) the relative pronoun is the oblique object of a verb having two arguments. In (41) it is indirect object of a verb having three arguments.

(40) Nkalola

ishitengo

ish

vhumwene

n -ha -lol -a i -shi -tengo i -shi -a u -vhu -mwene
1SG.SBJ -NARR -see -FV AUG -7 -chair AUG -7 -ASS AUG -14 -king

[shêREL wumo atendamiye]RC.

shi -a wu -umo a -tend -am -il -il -e
7 -REL 1 -certain 3SG.SBJ -sit -CONT -APPL -PFV -FV

'I saw a throne'... [on which REL one was sitting]RC.' (Revelation 4:2)

(41) Uno

we muntu

[H

uno wu u -mu -ntu wu -e
1PROX.DEM 1COP AUG -1 -person 1 -REL

nâmupiyiye

inyembe

RC.

in -a -mu -pa -il -il -e i -N -embe
1SG.SBJ -PT2 -3SG.OBJ -give -APPL -PFV -FV AUG -9 -mango

'This is the man'... [to whom REL I gave a mango]RC.' (elicited)

2. Complement of a locative phrase or of the particles na or kwa. The relative pronoun can also be the complement of a locative phrase. In this case Nyiha does not use a locative particle.

(42) Ino

mbogooso

[H

yeREL návhisile

in i -N -boogoos ye -e in -a -vhih -il -e
9PROX.DEM AUG -9 -box 9 -REL 1SG.SBJ -PT2 -put -PFV -FV

ikati

RC.

i -li -kati
AUG -5 -bread

'This is the box'... [in which REL I put the bread]RC.' (elicited)

3. When the relative pronoun is the complement of the comitative particle na, two patterns have been observed. Usually, na retains its own place in the clause (as Nyiha syntax does not allow anything in the RC to come before the relative pronoun), followed by a resumptive personal suffix.

(43) Ivha

vhasundikwa

[veREL áyanzile

navho

ivha a -vha -sundikwa vha -e a -a -yang -il -e na -vho
2PROX.DEM AUG -2 -student 2 -REL 3SG.SBJ -PT2 -talk -PFV -FV COM -3PL.PRO

'These are the students'... [with whom REL he talked]RC.' (elicited)

If possible, though, the function of na is incorporated in the prepositional form of the verb, as in (44b).

(44a) Ámuhomile

umukulu waakwe

a -a -mu -hom -il -e u -mu -kulu wu -akwe
3SG.SBJ -PT2 -3SG.OBJ -hit -PFV -FV AUG -1 -brother 3SG -1SG.POSS
ni ndiisa.
a na i -n -liisa
COM AUG -9 -stick
‘He hit his brother with a stick.’

(44b) Ino ndiisaH [yēREL] umukulu waakweHRC
ino i -N -liisa ye -e
9PROX.DEM AUG -9 -stick 9 -REL
ámuhomeeye umukulu waakwe]RC
a -a -mu -hom -il -il -e u -mu -kulu wu -akwe
3SG.SBJ -pt2 -3SG.OBJ -hit -APPL -PFV -FV AUG -1 -brother 3SG -1SG.POSS
‘This is the stickH [with whichREL he hit his brother]RC,’ (elicited)

In this case, it is still possible to use the simple verb and retain na with a resumptive personal suffix, as in (45), but this is considered to be less natural.

(45) Ino ndiisaH [yēREL] ámuhomeile
ino i -N -liisa ye -e a -a -mu -hom -il -e
9PROX.DEM AUG -9 -stick 9 -REL 3SG.SBJ -pt2 -3SG.OBJ -hit -PFV -FV
umukulu waakwe nayoHRC
u -mu -kulu wu -akwe na -yo AUG -1 -brother 3SG -1SG.POSS COM -9PRO
‘This is the stickH [with whichREL he hit his brother]RC,’ (elicited)

Note that the agent of a passive verb cannot be relativized in Nyiha.

(46a) UYesu ákuziilwe nu Pilato.
u -yesu a -a -kung -il -u -e na u -pilato
AUG(1A) -Jesus 3SG.SBJ -pt2 -imprison -PFV -PASS -FV COM AUG(1A) -Pilate
‘Jesus was imprisoned by Pilate.’

(46b) ñUmuntuH [wēREL] uYesu ákuziilwe
u -mu -ntu wu -e u -yesu a -a -kung -il -u -e AUG -1 -person 3SG -REL AUG(1A) -Jesus 3SG.SBJ -pt2 -imprison -PFV -PASS -FV
nawoHRC áali wu Pilato
na -wo a -a -li wu u -pilato COM -1 3SG.SBJ -pt2 -be 1A.COP AUG(1A) -Pilate
‘The manH [whomREL Jesus was imprisoned by]RC, was Pilate.’

Example (46b) would be understood by a Nyiha speaker as ‘The man whom Jesus was imprisoned with, was Pilate’, although this would be more naturally expressed by (47).

(47) ñUmuntuH [wēREL] uYesu ákuziilwe
u -mu -ntu wu -e u -yesu a -a -kung -il -u -e AUG -1 -person 3SG -REL AUG(1A) -Jesus 3SG.SBJ -pt2 -imprison -PFV -PASS -FV
pooka nawoHRC áali wu Pilato
pa -oka na -wo a -a -li wu u -pilato 16 -one COM -1 3SG.SBJ -pt2 -be 1A.COP AUG(1A) -Pilate
‘The manH [whomREL Jesus was imprisoned together with]RC, was Pilate.’
When the relative pronoun is the complement of the particle *kwa* (‘by means of’, ‘from’, ‘for’ ‘to’), *kwa* retains its place in the clause too, but the associative suffix *a* is replaced by a resumptive possessive pronoun, as in (48b).

(48a) Námsonteleziizye umwana kwa

in -a -m -sonteelezy -il -e u -mu -ana ku -a

1SG.SBJ -PT2 -3SG.OBJ -send -PFV -FV AUG -1 -child 17 -ASS

mukulu waane.

u -mu -kulu wu -ane

AUG -1 -brother 1 -1SG.POSS

‘I sent the child to my brother.’

(48b) Uno mukulu[II] [wëRE] námsonteleziizye

uno u -mu -kulu wu -e in -a -m -sonteelezy -il -e

1PROX.DEM AUG -1 -brother 3SG -REL 1SG.SBJ -PT2 -3SG.OBJ -send -PFV -FV

umwana ku kwakwe[RC].

u -mu -ane ku ku -akwe

AUG -1 -child 17LOC 17 -3SG.POSS

‘This is the brother[II] [who]REL I sent the child to[RC].’

4. Oblique object of a prepositional phrase. Nyiha can also use a prepositional phrase, consisting of a locative clitic, a noun and an associative particle (see 2.2.1.2, under C), for expressing the prepositional function. When this is the case, the same construction is used as with *kwa*. The prepositional phrase retains its place in the clause, but the associative particle is replaced by a resumptive possessive pronoun.

(49) UChilisiti[II], [wëRE] muhati yaakwe muli uvhudumbwe vhonti[RC].

u -chilisiti wu -e muhati i -akwe mu -li u -vhu -dumbwe vh -onti

AUG(1A) -Christ, 3SG -REL in 9 -3SG.POSS 18 -COP AUG -14 -richness 14 -all

‘Christ[II], [in whom]REL all richness is[RC].’ (Colossians 2:3, adapted)

D. Possessive modifier

The relative pronoun can also function as a possessive modifier in the RC. Normally, Nyiha realizes the semantic role of possessor through a possessive pronoun or an associative with a noun. If the possessor is a relative pronoun, the possessive relation is not grammatically marked on the relative pronoun but a resumptive possessive pronoun is used instead.

(50) Álíipo umuntu wumoh[II] [wëREL] inyoovhe

a -a -liipo u -mu -ntu wa -umo wu -e i -n -nyoovhe

3SG.SBJ -PT2 -be AUG -1 -person 1 -certain 3SG -REL AUG -9 -arm

yaakwe iya kundiilo yálemaaye[RC].

i -akwe i -i -a kundiilo i -a -lemal -il -e

9 -POSS AUG -9 -ASS right 9 -PT2 -be_withered -PFV -FV

‘There was a man[II] [whose]REL right arm was withered[RC].’ (Luke 6:6)

(51) Páliipo umutelesi umupiti[II], [wëREL] imbombo

pa -a -liipo u -mu -telesi u -mu -piti wu -e i -n -vhombo

16 -PT2 -be AUG -1 -cook AUG -1 -big 3SG -REL AUG -9 -work
There was a chief cook, whose work was to taste the food. (Uvhuntu 19)

E. Adverbial adjunct

The relative pronoun can also have the function of adverbial adjunct (relative adverb) in the RC.

(52) Ulwa kwanda [lwê vhahavuzyaga uYapinyila kuuti uvhufwe vhufumiiye,...]RC

‘The first time [when they told Yapinyila that death had occurred, ...]RC (Ishaaho 31; see (25))

See for other examples (14) and (15) above.

Adverbial RCs with a non-surfacing head are very common in Nyiha. In section 2.5, I discuss this type of RC in more detail.

2.3 Complex constructions and special types of relative constructions

This section is subdivided into two parts. In section 2.3.1 I describe two complex constructions, namely stacking and embedding of RCs. In section 2.3.2 I discuss cleft and pseudo-cleft constructions.

2.3.1 Stacking and embedding

It is possible in Nyiha to stack RCs. Stacking is possible with both non-restrictive (53) and restrictive RCs (54), and with a combination of a restrictive and a non-restrictive RC (55). In the last case, the non-restrictive RC appears as a rule to the right of the restrictive RC (De Vries 2002:190).

(53) Uweenwe we wu home uwa nalyoli, [wê mutanzi kuzyuha]RC1, havhili [wê akukonzya avhamwene vhonti avha mu nsi]RC2.

‘He is the faithful witness, [who is the first to rise from the dead]RC1, again [who rules over all the kings of the earth]RC2. (Revelation 1, 5)


‘Those [who have arrived]RC1 and [who are tired]RC2, will get help. But those [who are not tired...]RC3. (elicited)


‘They planned a trip to visit their grandfather [who was their mother’s father]RC1, [who lived far away]RC2. (Ishikunzi 15)

It is also possible in Nyiha to embed an RC in another RC, as in (56).


‘He met many people [who came from a/the town]RC2 [that was next to his town.]RC1’ (Ishaaho 7; see (4))

2.3.2. Cleft and pseudo-cleft constructions

(57) and (58) are examples of cleft constructions in Nyiha.
propose an analysis as a relative construction with a zero head and a zero relative pronoun: an additional main verb (the un-cleft counterpart of the sentence, as in (62).\( )\) (Intemo 3)

Nyiha has also a particular construction that is best analyzed as a pseudo-cleft construction.

\[ (59) \text{'Ine ne uNtemo ahampata nkaani.'} \]

\[ (60) \text{'Umulungu weeka we akumuswila} \]

At the surface level, it is not immediately clear that (59) and (60) are pseudo-cleft constructions. However, these sentences are syntactically problematic as they contain a double predicate: a copula and an additional main verb (ahampata (59) and akumuswila (60)). Therefore, for sentences like these I propose an analysis as a relative construction with a zero head and a zero relative pronoun:

\[ (61) \text{'Umulungu weeka we }\text{ [O}^{\text{H}}\text{]}\text{ [O}^{\text{REL}}\text{].} \]

Note that the copula in these constructions is always optional. Removing the copula would lead to the un-cleft counterpart of the sentence, as in (62).

\[ (62) \text{'Umulungu weeka akumuswila} \]

Further discussion of the discourse functions of cleft and pseudo-cleft constructions in Nyiha is beyond the scope of this research.
2.4 Restrictive and non-restrictive RCs

This section explores the way restrictive and non-restrictive RCs are distinguished in Nyiha. As mentioned in section 2.1, a restrictive RC is used for narrowing down the potential reference of a referring expression, whereas a non-restrictive RC is used to provide further background information about the referring expression. Consider again example (1) and (2), here repeated as (63) and (64).

(63) My sister\textsuperscript{H}, [who lives in Toronto]\textsuperscript{RC}, loves knitting.

(64) My sister\textsuperscript{H}, [who lives in Toronto]\textsuperscript{RC}, loves knitting.

The subordinate clause in (63) identifies my sister. The RC narrows down the potential reference of the noun 'sister' and restricts the reference to the particular sister who lives in Toronto: she is the one who loves knitting. The subordinate clause in (64), on the other hand, provides further background information about my sister. In the discourse environment in which this sentence is uttered this sister is already fully identifiable.

Dixon points out that in a fair number of languages all RCs are of the restrictive type (Dixon 2010: 352). In Bantu languages, it is not uncommon to have RCs of both the restrictive and the non-restrictive type. I have found references to a discussion of non-restrictive clauses in Bàsàà (Cameroon, A43) (Makasso 2010), the Orungu dialect of Myene (Gabon, B11) (Van de Velde and Ambouroue 2011), Lika (DRC, D201) (Augustin 2012), Swahili (Kenya/Tanzania, G40) (Mohammed 2001), and its variant Ngazidja (Comoros, G44) (Patin 2010), Haya (Tanzania, J22) (Riedel 2010), Wandya (Malawí variety, M23\textsuperscript{5}) (Mtenje 2011), Bemba (Zambia, M42) (Kula and Cheng 2007, Kula 2007), Chewa (Malawí, N31) (Downing and Mtenje 2010), Nsenga (Zambia, N41) (Simango 2006), Venda (South Africa, S21) (Zeller 2004), Sotho (South Africa, S30) (Du Plessis 2010), Tsawane (Botswana, S31) (Zerbian 2010) and Zulu (South Africa, S42) (Cheng and Downing 2007). I found papers stating that non-restrictive RCs do not exist in Nomaande (Cameroon, A46) (Wilkendorf 1997) and Kamba (Kenya, E55) (Rowbory 2008).\textsuperscript{6}

Nyiha has RCs of both the restrictive and non-restrictive type, but it does not make a formal distinction between these types. That means that, in isolation, the RC in the following sentence can be interpreted either way.

(65) Umukulu waane\textsuperscript{H} [wē\textsuperscript{REL}, akutenda ku Mbozi]\textsuperscript{RC} ampiiyi ishipeelwa.

‘My brother\textsuperscript{H}, [who\textsuperscript{REL} lives in Mbozi]\textsuperscript{RC} has given me a gift.’

‘My brother\textsuperscript{H}, [who\textsuperscript{REL} lives in Mbozi]\textsuperscript{RC}, has given me a gift.’ (elicited)

However, there are a few means that can help to distinguish non-restrictive RCs from restrictive RCs in Nyiha. In the following, I discuss two differences between restrictive and non-restrictive RCs in Nyiha.

1. Prosody/intonation

Dixon (2010:353) and De Vries (2002:195) state that a common way of distinguishing restrictive and non-restrictive RCs is by employing a distinctive intonation pattern for non-restrictive RCs. Mtenje confirms this observation for Bantu languages. He observes that in many Bantu languages, including Wandya (Mtenje 2011:127), Chewa (Downing and Mtenje 2010, 2011) and Zulu (Cheng and Downing, 2010), there is a prosodic phrase boundary following the head of a non-restrictive RC, whereas a restrictive RC phrases with its head. The same observation is made for Sotho by Du Plessis (2010). Mohammed (2001:183), likewise, observes in Swahili a separate intonation for non-restrictive RCs.

The same holds true for Nyiha. In the following examples, a prosodic phrase boundary (comma intonation) is marked by a right bracket {). (66) and (67) are examples of restrictive relative constructions; (68) and (69) show non-restrictive relative constructions.

\textsuperscript{5}See footnote 2 in the introduction for the classification of Wandya.

\textsuperscript{6}Thanks to Oliver Stegen (SIL UTB, Nairobi) for pointing me to references for Swahili, Ngazidja, Haya, Wanda, Nsenga and Zulu.
(66) Ahasiivha kukazya umugunda uyo ku vhanji[RC] [vhêREL vhalondolaga amagunda]. ‘He thought of selling this field to others[RC] [who REL were looking for fields].’ (UHalulu 6)

(67) ‘Imeza, ivitengo ni vintu ivwinji[RC] [vwêREL mukuvilola], vikufuma ku luho lwane.’” “The table, chairs and many other things[RC] [that REL you (pl.) see], come from my tribe.”’ (Intemo 23; see also (39))

(68) Shihamusevha uShaali[RC] {wêREL áali we wu songo}. ‘It chose Shaali[RC], [who REL was the oldest].’ (Ishikunzi 27)

(69) Páliipo umutelesi umupiti[RC] {wêREL imbombo yaakwe yáali ya kutoma ishakulya…}RC ‘There was a chief cook[RC], [whose REL work it was to try the food…].’ (Uvhuntu 19; see also (51))

It should be noted, however, that these examples were elicited by having a language consultant read these sentences (in their context) aloud. More research in oral discourse is needed to confirm these findings.

2. Specificity

De Vries (2002:182–185) discusses the relation between the specificity of the antecedent and the type of the RC. He states that, if the antecedent of an RC is indefinite, it must be either specific or used in a generic sense in order to license a non-restrictive RC. See the following examples.

(70) I saw a guy who was carrying a heavy barrel.

(71) ? I saw a guy, who was carrying a heavy barrel.

(72) My wife has given me a very nice sweater, which I promptly shrunk in the wash.

(73) Paleontologists have speculated that whales, who are mammals, once walked the earth.

The ‘a guy’ in (70) is unspecific, and therefore a non-restrictive RC is not possible (note, though, that a non-restrictive is possible if the ‘guy’ is understood as being a specific guy, as in ‘a certain guy’). On the other hand, ‘a very nice sweater’ in (72) refers to a specific sweater and the RC is non-restrictive. In (73), the reference to ‘whales’ is generic and the RC is non-restrictive.7

De Vries does not state anything about non-restrictive RCs with a definite antecedent. It is obvious, though, that the condition of specificity is equally valid for definite antecedents. In (74), the RC has an unspecific definite antecedent. A non-restrictive interpretation is not possible.

(74) James missed the bus. (unspecific)

(75) James missed the bus that goes to London. (unspecific, further specified with restrictive RC)

(76) *James missed the bus, that goes to London. (unspecific, non-restrictive RC not possible)

On the other hand, restrictive RCs do not usually modify a unique or already fully specified referent: as discussed in section 2.1 above, their very function is to specify the potential reference of a discourse referent, which is not needed for a unique or already specified referent.

(77) My mother, whom I dearly love, is seriously ill.

(78) *My mother whom I dearly love is seriously ill.

7Note that for a ‘generic’ head an ‘unspecific’ interpretation is possible as well: ‘Biologists have speculated that whales that live in Korean waters once came from colder areas.’

Although this difference between the head of non-restrictive and restrictive RCs is evident, it must be said that as a criterion for distinguishing restrictive and non-restrictive RCs it is in danger of being circular. Often it is the type of RC used that shows whether the author perceives a referent as specific or unspecific. This is illustrated in (79)–(80).

(79) Her mother gave her a nice blue cap, that her aunt had knitted.

(80) Her mother gave her a nice blue cap that her aunt had knitted.

It is possible to interpret the ‘nice blue cap’ as a specific cap about which further information is provided in a non-restrictive RC (79). It is equally possible to interpret the ‘nice blue cap’ as underspecified, further specification being given in a restrictive RC (80). Stating that the type of RC that is used reveals whether the antecedent is perceived as specific or unspecific is equally valid as stating that the parameter ‘specificity’ reveals which type of RC is used.

The relation between specificity of the antecedent and the type of RC applies to Nyiha as well. See the following examples.

(81) ‘Tuhonzye vhuuli nu mulugu wiitu uno uNtemo [whoREL akutumala uhusiku nu musanya]RC?’
   “What shall we do with our enemy this Axe, [whoREL is killing us night and day]RC?’ (Intemo 7)

   ‘He met many people [whoREL1 came from a/the town [whoREL2 was next to his town]RC2]RC1.’ (Ishaaho 7; see (4) and (56))

In (81), Axe is obviously a unique referent and therefore a restrictive interpretation of the RC is not possible. (82) contains two RCs, both with an unspecific head. A non-restrictive interpretation of these RC is not possible in the context.

When the antecedent of an RC is ambiguous for specificity, the RC can often be interpreted either way.

(83) ‘Vhinji vhakugombela iviholanyo [whoREL vhafuluma mu Vhulaya vhakulondola]RC,’
   “Many make idols [whoREL even people from Europe are looking for]RC’.
   “Many make [whoREL even people from Europe are looking for]RC’.
   (Intemo 30)

The most obvious interpretation of the antecedent in (83) is non-specific, the (restrictive) RC being used to further narrow down the specific type of idols that are made. It is not impossible, though, that the speaker refers to idols in general, about which he further states that they are being looked for by Europeans. In that case a non-restrictive interpretation of the RC is possible.

I conclude that if the context already makes clear whether the antecedent is specific or unspecific, this parameter can direct the reader in determining which type of RC is used. Often, though, the reasoning works in the opposite direction: the RC (of which the restrictive or non-restrictive interpretation is already obvious on other grounds) makes clear whether the antecedent should be interpreted as specific or non-specific.

Another difference between restrictive and non-restrictive RCs concerns the activation status of the information expressed in the relative construction. This is explored in section 3.

2.5 More on adverbial RCs

In section 2.2.1.2 it was mentioned that one of the functions the head of a relative construction can have in the MC is the function of adverbial adjunct. In this case, the relative pronoun always has an adverbial function in the RC too. An example of an adverbial RC having a surfacing head has been given in section
2.2.1.2 (25). In this section I discuss some types of adverbial RCs with a zero head in the MC (i.e. free adverbial RCs) in more detail.

As De Vries (2002:56) rightly observes, the difference between a free adverbial RC and a normal adverbial clause can be subtle or even absent. Crucial for a free adverbial RC is that there is a pivotal constituent that has an adverbial function in both the MC and the RC, as in examples (84) and (85).

(84) Bram’s sister visited him when he graduated.  (adverbial RC)

(85) Bram’s sister visited him because he graduated.  (adverbial clause)

In (84) there is a pivotal constituent in both MC and RC (although it does not surface in the MC): the day when Bram graduated, which is the same day that his sister visited him. The two events happen at the same point of time. In (85) there is no pivotal constituent: the reason for the visit is not the same reason as why he graduated. I consider the four adverbial clauses in sections 2.5.1–2.5.4 as adverbial RCs, because they are introduced by a relative pronoun. It must be said, though, that it is difficult to see how a causal clause (as in 2.5.4) can share a pivotal constituent with the MC.

In all four cases discussed below, the reason for using a particular noun class for the relative pronoun is unclear.

2.5.1  **Clauses introduced by lwê**

Lwê is the relative pronoun for noun class 11. It also functions as a temporal relative adverb and as such introduces a temporal subordinate clause. This subordinate clause expresses anteriority when it contains a present perfective verb form.

(86) Lwê vhapalamila kwinjila mu nkaaya yiila, vhahiivwa avhantu vhakuloosya.  
‘After they had come close to enter that town, they heard people mourning.’ (Ishaaho 19)

A subordinate clause introduced by lwê expresses simultaneity when it contains a present continuous verb form.

(87) Lwê vhakupalamila kwinjila pa nkaaya ya Yapinyila, vhahalola avhantu avhinji...
‘When they were coming close to enter the house of Yapinyila, they saw many people...’ (Ishaaho 20)

For simultaneity in the past, the far past imperfective tense can be used instead of the present continuous tense.

(88) ‘Lwê ahakalaga umugunda atavhwenyi kuuti muli?’
“‘When he was buying the field, did he not see what he got’?” (Uhalalu 33)

An adverbial RC introduced by lwê can either precede or follow the MC. As I show in section 3, the position of the adverbial RC with regard to the MC depends on the activation status of the information expressed in the adverbial RC. See for further discussion section 3.3.

2.5.2  **Clauses introduced by shê**

Shê is the relative pronoun for noun class 7. It also functions as a temporal relative adverb expressing simultaneity and as such introduces a temporal subordinate clause.

(89) Ahimiilila pilongolela ilya shifinjilo shê alemile ku nyoovhe uluvhiga ulwa sahaabu.
‘He stood in front of the altar while holding a golden scale in his hand.’ (Revelation 8:3)

Although this use of shê is perceived as natural speech, in the text corpus shê is only used once in this manner. More research is needed to understand the difference between adverbial RCs introduced by shê or lwê in natural contexts.
2.5.3 Clauses introduced by vwê

Vwê is the relative pronoun for noun class 8, which is the plural of class 7. It also functions as a relative adverb and as such introduces an adverbial RC indicating manner.

(90) Lwê uWizimani akusiivha vwê kwe agaaje aminzi ga kumwela, ahakumbuha...
    ‘While Wissmann was thinking about how to find drinking water, he remembered…’ (Uvhuntu 70)

(91) ‘Ukulola impuga vwê yituvigiinye.’
    ‘You see how the crowd is pressing us’. (Mark 5,31)

2.5.4 Clauses introduced by mwê

Another relative pronoun that can be used to introduce an adverbial clause is the (locative) noun class 18 pronoun mwê. Adverbial clauses introduced by mwê mark a causal relationship (‘because’).

(92) ‘Akushimbila mwê akukumbuha ziila zye azivhomvile.’
    ‘He is running away, because he remembers what he has done’ (Uhalulu 39)

(93) ‘Ye saha, “Mwê waamula ahinza, vhwelaga kuhaaya.”
    ‘Jesus said, “Because you have answered well, go back home”’. (Mark 7: 29)

As these examples show, mwê can be used either anaphorically (92) or cataphorically (93). In section 3.3 I discuss the difference between the anaphoric and the cataphoric use of mwê in more detail.

3 The activation status of information in Nyiha relative constructions

In this section I discuss the activation status of discourse referents and propositions and its relevance for Nyiha relative constructions. In section 3.1 I give a theoretical framework for the activation status of information. In section 3.2 I apply this framework to relative constructions in Nyiha, and in section 3.3 I focus on subordinate clauses introduced by the adverbial relatives lwê and mwê.

3.1 Theoretical framework

One issue often discussed in the literature about the way information is structured in sentences is the activation status of discourse referents. A well-known distinction is between ‘given’ and ‘new’ information, but these terms mean various things to various people (see for a discussion Lambrecht (1994:43–50) and Prince (1992:301–310)). In this section, I discuss four categorizations of the activation status of information in a sentence, proposed by Ellen F. Prince (1981 and 1992), Knud Lambrecht (1994) and Stephen H. Levinsohn (2007).

As a starting point for discussion I take Prince’s 1992 analysis of the activation status of information, as this analysis helps to clarify her earlier (1981) approach and the categorizations proposed by Lambrecht and Levinsohn. In her 1992 article, Prince introduces the binary oppositions hearer-old/hearer-new information and discourse-old/discourse-new information, and a separate category of inferable information, ‘information’ meaning discourse referents in this categorization (see figure 1 for an overview of the four categorizations discussed here).
The term hearer-old information refers to a referent that might be new to the discourse, but is already known to the hearer.\(^8\) When I utter (94) to a friend, I suppose that my friend already knows who Albertine is.

(94) Albertine visited an orphanage.

On the other hand, the orphanage I mention in this utterance is hearer-new information. Presumably, the hearer doesn’t know anything about the orphanage yet (for which reason the orphanage is linguistically marked by an indefinite article).

Discourse-old information is information that has already been explicitly introduced into the discourse. In the second sentence in (95), ‘It’ refers to the orphanage already mentioned, and is therefore discourse-old information.

(95) Albertine visited an orphanage. It was set up by a Danish church.

Discourse-new information is information that is new to the discourse, but might not be new to the hearer. Thus Albertine in (94) was newly introduced into the discourse, although supposedly the hearer knew her already.

A note must be made on the mutual (in-)dependency of the binary oppositions introduced here. As a matter of fact, the activation status of a piece of information in the hearer’s mind is partly related to its status in the discourse. Hearner-new information will always be discourse-new information as well, and conversely, discourse-old information has to be hearer-old information as well. That leaves three possibilities for the activation status of information, resulting from these binary oppositions: information is either discourse-new/hearer-new, or discourse-new/hearer-old, or discourse-old/hearer-old. Hence in (95), ‘Albertine’ is discourse-new/hearer-old, ‘an orphanage’ and ‘a Danish church’ are both discourse-new/hearer-new, while ‘it’ is discourse-old/hearer-old.

A separate category proposed by Prince is what she calls inferable information. In the second sentence in (96), the door is a new element both to the discourse and to the hearer. Even so, the door is not a completely unexpected element in the discourse, as buildings typically have doors.

(96) Albertine entered an orphanage. The door was missing.

Inferable information is the kind of information that can be inferred from a schema, general beliefs or a certain context (Prince 1992:301–310).

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\(^8\)Prince uses the term ‘hearer’ instead of ‘reader’ to refer to the receptor of the information communicated by the text. In this section, I use the terms ‘hearer’ and ‘reader’ interchangeably, as the use of ‘hearer’ in some contexts would be rather unnatural.
In an older article (1981), Prince uses other terminology for the different activation states of information in a sentence. Information that is entirely new to the hearer (and therefore must be new to the discourse as well) is called ‘brand-new information’. If information has already been introduced into the discourse (and therefore must be known by the hearer as well), it gets the label ‘textually evoked information’. Another category Prince uses in this article is ‘situationally evoked information’: information that is discourse-new, but is evoked from the direct context in which the discourse takes place (e.g. present discourse participants like ‘I’ and ‘you’). Consider utterance (97).

(97) I met Albertine in an orphanage.

Suppose the ‘I’ in this utterance is new to the discourse. Yet the context in which the discourse takes place makes this discourse referent immediately identifiable to the hearer. In that sense situationally evoked information can be considered as hearer-old information: it seems reasonable to assume that this situationally evoked participant was not entirely new to the hearer. In addition, Prince introduces the label ‘unused information’ for discourse-new/hearer-old information that is not evoked from the situational context, but is even so already known to the hearer. In (98), Barack Obama is a newly introduced participant, but he is likely to be known by the hearer. So far, this knowledge was unused but now the speaker activates it.

(98) Barack Obama visited an orphanage.

Furthermore, brand-new information can be distinguished into brand-new anchored and brand-new unanchored information: anchored information is linked to another referent in the discourse, while unanchored information is not. Thus, Albertine in (99) is a brand-new discourse participant, but she is anchored to the speaker:

(99) My wife Albertine visited an orphanage.

A last category Prince distinguishes is the ‘inferables’, the category illustrated in (96).

Another categorization comes from Lambrecht (1994). In analyzing the possible activation states of referents, he uses the older (1981) categorization proposed by Prince, but introduces a slightly different terminology: he distinguishes between active, accessible, unused, brand-new anchored and brand-new unanchored information. In this categorization, active information is information that is ‘currently lit up, a concept in a person’s focus of consciousness at a particular moment’ (Lambrecht 1994:94, citing Chafe 1987:22ff), which means a discourse referent that is accessible from the immediate textual context. Thus, in (95), Lambrecht would analyze ‘it’ in the second sentence as an active discourse referent, as it is immediately accessible from the previous sentence (and therefore it is possible to give it unambiguous pronominal coding).

In his classification, Lambrecht breaks accessible information down into textually, situationally and inferentially accessible information, the latter two being counterparts of Prince’s situationally evoked and inferable information. Textually accessible information is, in Lambrecht’s words, information that is deactivated from some earlier active state in the discourse. Prince’s categories of unused and brand-new information remain the same in Lambrecht’s approach (Lambrecht 1994:93–113).

While Prince and Lambrecht use their classification for determining the activation status of discourse referents, Levinsohn (2007) uses a simplification of Lambrecht’s categorization for determining the activation status of complete propositions, as expressed in a clause. For this purpose, he introduces a four-way distinction that comprises active information, immediately accessible information because of a schema, information which is accessible from a more removed context and brand-new (previously not-accessed) information (2007:147). The following sentences may serve to illustrate his categorization:

(100) Albertine visited an orphanage. After visiting the orphanage, ... (active)

(101) Albertine visited an orphanage. When she came back, ... (immediately accessible)

(102) Albertine visited an orphanage. [...] After visiting the orphanage, ... (accessible from a more remote context)
When Albertine visited Simike Orphanage, … (brand new)

In (100), the subordinate clause recapitulates information that is active: it is mentioned in the directly preceding sentence. The subordinate clause in (101) introduces information that has not been mentioned yet, but is inferable from a ‘visit schema’: after paying a visit somewhere, you typically come back home. In (102), the subordinate clause reintroduces information that was active at some point in the text, but has become inactive. The information in the subordinate clause in (103) is brand-new—although it might be hearer-old and thus unused information for a hearer who knows that Albertine is a supervisor for a couple of orphanages, leading to the assumption that she will visit those orphanages every now and then. In fact, it is not always possible to determine whether an author assumes a newly introduced discourse referent or proposition to be already known or not known by the reader (i.e. whether it is unused or brand-new information). I come back to that below.

One disadvantage of Levinsohn’s approach is that his label ‘remotely accessible’ represents a rather vague category and is not easy to distinguish from ‘immediately accessible’ information. From his examples, one gets the impression that he calls immediately accessible information what Prince and Lambrecht call ‘inferable / inferentially accessible information’, whereas his ‘information accessible from a more removed context’ corresponds with Lambrecht’s textually accessible information (but will probably include situationally accessible information as well). His examples fail to make clear whether ‘unused information’ (a category he does recognize) is included in immediately accessible or in remotely accessible information. Also, Levinsohn does not make clear why textually or situationally accessible information would be less accessible than inferentially accessible information.

In my analysis below, I use both Prince’s newer (1992) and Lambrecht’s (1994) classification of information accessibility. Prince’s binary oppositions are helpful where the most determining factor is whether information has been introduced into the discourse or not, whereas Lambrecht’s categorization is helpful where a more refined categorization is needed. From Levinsohn (2007) I adopt the idea of applying classifications of information status not only to discourse referents, but also to complete propositions. Note that for practical reasons I do not distinguish between brand-new anchored and brand-new unanchored information: the amount of anchored brand-new constituents or propositions in the text corpus is too low for a reliable analysis.

Now we must turn our attention to the information status in relative constructions. The following examples show how the classification of activation states in subordinate clauses can be applied to RCs as well.

Albertine visited an orphanage. The visit that she paid to the orphanage… (active)

Albertine visited an orphanage. (...) The visit that Albertine paid to the orphanage… (textually accessible)

Albertine visited an orphanage. The moment that she came back,… (inferentially accessible)

Albertine visited the orphanage that you see over there. (situationally accessible)

The woman who visited this orphanage last year… (unused)

Once there was a woman, who visited an orphanage. (brand new)

In (104), the RC recapitulates information that has been mentioned in the sentence before and is therefore still active. The RC in (105) recapitulates the same information, but here other information has come in between, so that the information in the RC is no longer active, but still (textually) accessible. Sentence (106) gives an example of inferential information in an RC: the return from a visit is part of a ‘visit schema’. In (107), the proposition in the RC is situationally accessible. The information in the RC in (108) is best analyzed as unused: the reader presumably knows that in normal life orphanages are visited by people every now and then. The RC in (109) is an example of information that is introduced as brand new.
Levinsohn, writing about the activation status of propositions in subordinate clauses, has some interesting observations related to relative constructions.

Restrictions on the use of relative clauses vary from language to language. Wiesmann (2000:72) finds that brand-new information is never given in a restrictive relative clause in the Toussian (Gur) language of Burkina Faso. (...) In other languages, the head noun is established information, but the relative clause itself contains new information. (Levinsohn 2007:154)

Hollenbach and Watters (1998) have a similar observation for restrictive relative clauses, i.e. they do not contain new information. For non-restrictive relative clauses, though, it is usual to convey new information.

The content of restrictive relative clauses is packaged as “old information,” information the speaker assumes the addressee knows from context or experience. The content of nonrestrictive (sic) relatives, on the other hand, is usually “new information,” information assumed to be previously unknown to the addressee or at least presented as if it were unknown. (Hollenbach and Watters 1998:section 2.2)

Lambrecht (1994) gives some additional explanation as to why restrictive relative clauses would provide ‘old’ information.

It is often said that the proposition expressed by a restrictive relative clause is “presupposed” (in one sense of this word), meaning that it is assumed to be already known (or believed or otherwise taken for granted) by the addressee. Thus when I say ... ‘I finally met the woman who moved in downstairs’ what I want to communicate to my addressee is that I met my new neighbour (whose existence and sex I assume my addressee is aware of), not that someone moved in downstairs. By using the restrictive relative clause who moved in downstairs I express the fact that I take for granted that my addressee already knows that someone moved in downstairs (1994:51).

Note that Lambrecht’s characterization of the type of information found in a restrictive RC as presupposed, meaning already known, believed or taken for granted, is wider than Hollenbach and Watters’ (1998) and Levinsohn’s (2007) descriptions. Information that is taken for granted by a reader is not necessarily already known information. Lambrecht’s own example illustrates this nicely: even if the proposition that a woman moved in downstairs is brand-new to me, I can just take it for granted. Here Lambrecht’s distinction between presupposition and assertion is crucial: what I want to assert in this sentence is that I met a woman, what I presuppose is that the reader is ready to take for granted that a woman moved in downstairs (Lambrecht 1994:51, 52). As the label ‘taken for granted’ applies in the first place to the author’s assumptions and not to the activation status of information, I do not use it in my analysis.

From Levinsohn’s (2007) and Hollenbach and Watters’ (1998) quotations given above I deduce three observations that I further test in my analysis of Nyiha relative constructions.

1. Restrictive RCs do (usually) not contain brand-new information (Wiesmann (2000), and Hollenbach and Watters).
2. Alternatively, if a restrictive RC does contain new information, the head of the RC is established information (Levinsohn).
3. Non-restrictive RCs usually contain brand-new information (Hollenbach and Watters).

Before we move to the analysis of Nyiha RCs, two final comments are in order. First, it must be noted that often the distinction between unused and brand-new information is difficult to make. See the following example from the Nyiha text corpus.

(110) Vhinji vhakugombela iviholanyoH [vwê na vhuantu avhafuma mu Vhulaya vhakuvilondola]RC.

‘Many make idolsH [that even people from Europe are looking for.]RC (Intemo 30; see also (83))

In (110), it is difficult to decide whether the author assumes the information in the RC to be known by his reader or not. If uttered in a specific setting, the reader might know what kind of idols is meant by the author. But the information might as well be brand new for the reader—in which case it is even possible to interpret the RC as non-restrictive.
In the same way is it sometimes difficult to distinguish between unused and inferentially accessible information. The RC in (111) can be read as containing either of both types, depending on whether the reader is acquainted with the fact that Christ was born on a certain day (unused information), or thinks in terms of a ‘Christmas schema’ (inferentially accessible information).  

(111)  
Ivikulukuulu ivwa chaaka, ivikulukuulu ivi vikuvhombeha kukumbuha isikuH [lyê uChilisiti ápañilwe]RC.  
‘Christmas holidays, these holidays are being held to recall the dayH [that Christ was born]RC.’ (Amaata 18)

Another note must be made on the activation status of discourse referents or propositions in direct speech. Direct speech creates a new discourse environment within the discourse environment of the text itself. Therefore, information that is new to the ‘direct speech discourse’ might not be new to the text and vice versa. This can be illustrated by the following two examples.

(112)  
‘Nakwita ileelo ili mu nyumba munuumuH [mwê wápafwilwe]RC,  
‘I have called you today in this houseH [where you were born]RC.’ (Kwimala 4)

(113)  
‘UHalulu akuhopeeye kukukazizya umugunda unoH, [wê wu te ni mboto naayimo]RC,  
‘Rabbit has deceived you by selling you this fieldH, [that is not fertile at all]RC.’ (UHalulu 14)

In general, an author is aware of these two different discourse environments and adapts the composition of his text to the discourse environment of the direct speech. This is obvious from the fact that the reference ‘this house’ in (112) assumes the existence of a situational environment that the author simply cannot assume to be accessible for the reader of his story. What he can assume, though, is that the reader knows about this second discourse layer as well and is able to process this reference, even if adapted to the discourse environment of the direct speech. Therefore, in my analysis I will treat direct speech as a separate discourse and will thus analyze both (112) and (113) as situationally accessible, although their actual accessibility in the text is different: in the text, the house in (112) is a brand-new constituent, whereas the field in (113) is a textually accessible referent. Except for in direct speech, the activation status ‘situationally accessible’ does not occur very often in the text corpus, as the author usually cannot refer to a situational environment that he shares with the reader.

In section 3.2, I investigate whether the activation status of information plays a relevant role in the way relative constructions are used in Nyiha. In doing so, I exclude cleft and pseudo-cleft constructions from my analysis. Their pragmatic function is likely to be different from canonical relative constructions, and they would therefore need a separate analysis. I also exclude adverbial RCS from my analysis, since functionally they resemble adverbial clauses rather than non-adverbial RCS. Two types of adverbial RCS will be discussed separately in section 3.3.

### 3.2 The activation status of information in Nyiha relative constructions

#### 3.2.1 Non-restrictive relative constructions

The text corpus has 22 non-restrictive relative constructions. In this section I investigate the activation status of the discourse referent that functions as the head of the RC (3.2.1.1) and the activation status of the proposition expressed in the RC (3.2.1.2). In section 3.2.1.3, I investigate the relation between the activation status of the head of the RC and the RC itself.

---

9In fact, inferentially accessible information is by its very nature always unused information, as it presupposes the knowledge of a certain cognitive schema or semantic frame.
3.2.1.1 The activation status of the head of the RC

The following table summarizes the activation status of the discourse referent that functions as the head of a non-restrictive RC.

Table 1. The activation status of the head of non-restrictive RCs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>discourse/hearer-new</td>
<td>brand-new</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>inferable</td>
<td>inerentially accessible</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>discourse-new,</td>
<td>unused</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hearer-old</td>
<td>situationally accessible</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>discourse-old,</td>
<td>textually accessible</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hearer-old</td>
<td>active</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>22</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Since the total amount of non-restrictive relative constructions is not very high, we must be careful in drawing conclusions from the figures provided in this table. In non-restrictive relative constructions, the discourse referent that functions as the head of the RC is most often a referent that is newly introduced to the discourse (77%). There is a good reason why this is the case. As mentioned in the previous section, non-restrictive RCs usually contain further introductory or background information, and that is exactly the type of information one would expect with newly introduced participants. Even if a referent is already known to the reader (but is new to the discourse), the author might still want to provide further background information and the most natural place to provide this is when the participant is introduced into the discourse.

The following examples show a discourse referent that is brand new (3.21) to the discourse or already accessible in one or another way: inferentially accessible (3.22), unused (3.23) or situationally accessible (3.24).

(114) Páliipo umutelesi umupitiH, [wê imbombo yaakwe yáali ya kutoma ishaakulya...]BC

‘There was a chief cookH, [whose work it was to try the food...]BC (Uvhuntu 19; see also (51))

(115) Imbila ya uluhomano ulyo yáfumile ku washitengo waawhoH, [wê áali uLituvhu]RC.

‘Word of this meeting came from their chairmanH, [who was Fig]RC.’ (Intemo 3)

(116) AVhanyiha vhakumupuuta umulungu uwa ku mwanyaH [wê Mupezi uwa vintu vyonti]RC.

‘The Nyiha people worship the God of heavenH, [who is the Creator of all things]RC.’ (Amaata 27)

(117) ‘UHalulu akuhopeeye kukukazizya umugunda unoH, [wê wu te ni mboto nayiimo]BC:

++Rabbit has deceived you by selling you this fieldH, [that is not fertile at all]BCn.’ (UHalulu 14; see (113))

In (114), the main function of the sentence is to introduce a new participant to the discourse. The story in which this sentence occurs tells about a rich white man, who used to live in Nyiha-land long ago. The new participant, the chief cook, has not been mentioned before. A chief cook might possibly fit in a schema of ‘a rich white man living in Africa in the first half of the 20th century’, but a present-day author probably does not expect his reader to be used to such a schema. Therefore the best label here is ‘brand-new’. Sentences like (114), with the main function of introducing a new participant to the discourse, are usually labeled as having a sentence-focus structure (Lambrecht 1994:137–146, 177–181, 233–235). Out of the six cases in the text corpus with a brand-new referent functioning as a head of a non-restrictive RC, four have sentence focus.

In (115), the chairman of a meeting of the trees is introduced. In the previous sentence it was told that the trees are planning to have a meeting. As meetings typically have a chairman, this chairman in (115) is best analyzed as an inferentially accessible referent. ‘The God of heaven’ in (116), newly
introduced to the discourse, is very likely to be a known referent (even to non-Christian Nyiha readers, according to my Nyiha consultant) and is thus best analyzed as an unused referent. (117) is a remark uttered in direct speech. For the reader the field is textually accessible, but in the context in which the utterance is made it is situationally accessible: the field is newly introduced, but the participants are standing on it while discussing its fertility.

In five cases, the discourse referent that serves as the head of a non-restrictive relative construction has already been introduced in the discourse before. The discourse referent is either textually accessible (118) or active ((119) and (120), below).

(118) Akuvhaavwa nu kuvhavombela amapiti na vhapootwe inza uShiila\textsuperscript{H}, [wê avhantu vahasiivhaga kuuti atangavhomba naashimo]\textsuperscript{RC}.

‘He helps and treats important people and poor people like Shiila\textsuperscript{H}, [whom people considered was not able to do anything]\textsuperscript{RC}.’ (Ishikunzi 68)

Example (118) is from the final paragraph of a story about Shiila and her siblings. The narrative has ended and now the author draws the moral from his story. The last mention of Shiila was a few sentences ago, so she is no longer active, but still textually accessible. In the RC, the author reminds his reader of the fact that Shiila was not very well thought of, as this is relevant for the moral of the story. In all three cases where the head of the RC is a textually accessible discourse referent, the proposition in the RC is also textually accessible. In two of these cases, the author wants to reactivate known information about a known discourse referent in the reader’s mind, because it is of special relevance in the context of the utterance. The third case of a textually accessible head of the RC is similar to (120) which is discussed below.

In two cases in the text corpus, the head of the RC is found to be an active discourse referent.

(119) ‘Mwana waane\textsuperscript{H} [wê inkukunzite nkaani]\textsuperscript{RC}, nkukusoha kuuti…’

‘“My son\textsuperscript{H}, [whom I very much love]\textsuperscript{RC}, I warn you…”’ (Kwimala 17)

(120) Vhonti\textsuperscript{H} [vhê vhavhili]\textsuperscript{RC} vhahavhamalaga.

‘They both killed them. (lit. ‘all\textsuperscript{H}, [who are two]\textsuperscript{REL}, killed them’)’ (Intemo 72)

(119) is uttered in a speech of a father to his son. In this speech, the father addresses his son repeatedly by means of expressions like ‘my son’, ‘my dear son’, or, as is the case here, ‘my son whom I love’. This has the clear rhetorical function of reestablishing their relationship.

The head of the RC in (120) is an active discourse participant as well. The function of the RC is to express the quantifying idea of ‘both’. One way to express this quantifying idea in Nyiha is by an RC. The corpus has one other example of this expression, in a case where the discourse referent is textually accessible (Ishaaho 30).

3.2.1.2 The activation status of the proposition expressed in the RC

The following table summarizes the activation status of the proposition expressed in non-restrictive RCs in the text corpus.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>discourse/hearer-new</td>
<td>brand new</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>inferable</td>
<td>inferentially accessible</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>discourse-new, hearer-old</td>
<td>unused</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>situationally accessible</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>discourse-old, hearer-old</td>
<td>textually accessible</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>active</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In 17 out of 22 cases (77%), the proposition in the non-restrictive RC expresses information that is new to the discourse. The proposition in the RC is most often new to the hearer as well (54%); in five cases the information is already accessible for the reader (23%). Thus Hollenbach and Watters’ observation that non-restrictive RCs most often contain new information is true for Nyiha.

In all of these 17 cases, the head of the non-restrictive RC is new to the discourse as well (see for a discussion section 3.2.1.3). In most of the cases, the function of the RC is to provide further introductory information for the newly introduced discourse referent.

(121) Imbila iya luhomano ulwo yáfumile ku washitengo waavho, [wê áali uLituvhu].
‘Word of this meeting came from their chairman, [who was Fig].’ (Intemo 3; see (115))

(122) Isiku limo uShaali nu Loozi vhápanzile uvhulendo kuvhala kumulamuha unyinakulu waavho [we ápaafile unyina], [wê áali ukutali].
‘One day, uShaali and Loozi planned a trip to their grandmother [who was their mother’s mother], [who lived far away].’ (Ishikunzi 15)

(123) ‘UHalulu akuhopeeye kukukazizya umugunda uno, [wê wu te ni mboto nayiimo].
‘“Rabbit has deceived you by selling you this field, [that is not fertile at all].”’ (UHalulu 14; see (113))

(124) Páliipo umutelesi umupiti, [wê imbombo yaakwe yáali ya kutoma ishaakulya…]
‘There was a chief cook, [whose work it was to try the food…].’ (Uvhuntu 19; see also (51))

(125) ‘We Mulungu, wa nkozya vhuuli [nê mwana waaho].’
‘“Oh God, what have you done to me, [who am your child]?”’ (Ishaaho 28)

In (121), the chairman of a meeting is newly introduced to the discourse. His name is mentioned in a non-restrictive RC and is new to the reader. (122) also introduces a new participant to the discourse. Further information about this new participant is put in two RCs, the first being restrictive and meant to identify the grandmother, the second being non-restrictive and providing further, and in this case new information about the grandmother. The situation in (123) is slightly different. This sentence is uttered in direct speech, in a conversation between Tortoise and his friends. Tortoise’s friends tell him that the field he bought is not fertile, which is new information for him, although the reader of the story knows it already.

The RC in (124) provides inferentially accessible information. When a reader reads about a cook, he can infer from a ‘cooking schema’ that (part of) this cook’s job is to try the food.

Sentence (125) is an example where the RC does not provide introductory material. This sentence is uttered in direct speech to God when the speaker finds out that he has lost his wife and child. In the direct discourse environment of the speaker speaking to God, the fact that he is God’s child has not been mentioned before, but is even so undoubtedly known to God (from the perspective of the reader, this proposition is brand-new information, unless he comes from a theological background where all people are considered children of God). The function of the RC here is to reestablish known information that the speaker feels God needs to be reminded of in these specific circumstances.

In five cases, the information expressed in the non-restrictive RC has already been introduced to the discourse before, whether it is textually accessible ((126) and (127)) or even active (128, below) information. In all these cases, the head of the RC has already been introduced to the discourse as well.

(126) Shihamusevha uShaali, [wê áali wu songo].
‘It chose Shaali, [who was the oldest].’ (Ishikunzi 27)

(127) ‘Mwana waane, [wê inkukunzite nkaani], nkukusoha kuuti…’
‘“My son,” [whom I very much love], I warn you that…”’ (Kwimala 17; see also (119))

The information expressed in the RC in (126) is textually accessible for the reader: it has been mentioned before that Shaali was the oldest child. This information is reactivated here, as it is important
in this context: it provides a reason for the monster choosing Shaali as his victim. (127) has been
discussed before. The father of this son has already mentioned several times that he loves his son, so this
information is ‘textually’ accessible for the son.

In one case, the non-restrictive RC expresses information that is already active in the discourse. This
is the same sentence as discussed in (120). See my discussion above.

(128) Vhonti[H] [vhe vahili]RC vahavhamalaga.
‘They both killed them. (lit. ‘all’H, [who are two]REL, killed them’)’ (Intemo 72; see also (120))

3.2.1.3 The relation between the activation status of the head of the RC and the proposition in the RC

The relative constructions in the text corpus show a strong correlation between the activation status
of the head of the RC and the proposition as expressed in the RC. The following tables show the correlation
between the activation status of the head of the RC and the proposition in the RC for the parameters
discourse-old/new (table 3) and hearer-old/new (table 4).10 The amount of relative constructions in
the text corpus is not high enough to allow a reliable analysis according to Lambrecht’s six categories.

Table 3. Correlation between information status of head of RC and proposition in RC: in the discourse

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Head of the RC</th>
<th>Proposition in RC</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>discourse-old (5)</td>
<td>discourse-old (5)</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>discourse-new (0)</td>
<td></td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>discourse-old (0)</td>
<td></td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>discourse-new (17)</td>
<td></td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4. Correlation between information status of head of RC and proposition in RC: for the hearer

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Head of the RC</th>
<th>Proposition in RC</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>hearer-old (16)</td>
<td>hearer-old (8)</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hearer-new (8)</td>
<td></td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hearer-new (6)</td>
<td>hearer-old (2)</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>hearer-new (4)</td>
<td>67%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There is a very strong relation between the activation status of the head of the RC and the
proposition in the RC in non-restrictive relative constructions when it comes to their status in the
discourse. In all cases where the head of the RC is new to the discourse, the proposition in the RC is new
to the discourse as well. The reason for this is obvious when we look at an earlier discussed example
again.

(129) AVhanyiha vhakumupuuta uMulungu uwa ku mwanya[H] [wê Mupezi uwa vintu vyonti]RC.
‘The Nyiha people worship the God of heaven[H], [who is the Creator of all things]RC.’ (Amaata 27; see also
(116))

As discussed before, the function of a non-restrictive RC with a newly introduced discourse referent
is to provide further introductory information about it. When a referent is newly introduced, any
statement about it most naturally is new to the discourse as well. It is difficult to see how the proposition
‘God is the Creator of all things’ in (129) could be already established information in the discourse when
God has not been introduced to the discourse yet.

Likewise, in the five cases where the head of the RC has already been introduced to the discourse,
the proposition in the RC has been introduced as well. Here it must be remembered, though, that out of

10For simplicity’s sake, inferentially accessible information is here and in section 3.2.2.3 considered to be hearer-old,
as it appeals to a frame or schema that is already known by the reader.
these five cases three were somewhat atypical, as I showed above ((119) and (120)). More examples from natural texts would be needed to decide whether there is a relation between activation status in MC and RC.

There does not seem to be a clear relation between the activation status in MC and RC when it comes to their status for the hearer.

### 3.2.2 Restrictive relative constructions

In this section I investigate the activation status of the head of the RC (whether it surfaces or gets zero realization) (3.2.2.1) and the proposition expressed in the RC (3.2.2.2) in restrictive relative constructions. In section 3.2.2.3, I investigate the relation between the activation status of the head of the MC and of the proposition expressed in the RC.

As argued in section 2, the relation of a restrictive RC to its head is different from the relation of a non-restrictive RC to its head. A non-restrictive RC provides further introductory or background information about a discourse referent, whereas the function of a restrictive RC is to narrow down the potential reference of the discourse referent it is attached to. Thus, a restrictive RC plays an important role in making the discourse referent accessible to the reader.

Therefore, in my analysis of the activation status of discourse referents in restrictive relative constructions, when I analyze a referent as textually accessible, this does not necessarily mean that this referent is immediately accessible to the reader. It might well be that a reader will only realize that this is a discourse participant that has been introduced before after reading the RC. An illustration in (130) may serve to clarify my point.

(130) ‘Mutaziyanganje ziilaH [zyê akutuvhombela]RC ndaali.’

‘Don’t talk at all about those thingsH [that he is doing to us]RC.’ (Intemo 27)

The ziila (those things) in (130) refers to a discourse referent that has already been introduced before and is thus not a brand-new referent. Although this referent might not be immediately accessible to a reader (and therefore gets an RC narrowing down the possible reference) it is still analyzed as a textually accessible referent because it refers to a discourse participant mentioned before. Analyzing ziila as a brand-new (because inaccessible) referent would not be correct and would fail to distinguish between referents that are really new to the discourse or the reader and referents that are in some way already known (although not immediately accessible because underspecified).

#### 3.2.2.1 The activation status of the head of the RC

The following table summarizes the activation status of the head of restrictive relative constructions in the text corpus.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Distribution</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Prince (1992)</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>discourse/hearer-new</td>
<td>brand new</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>inferable</td>
<td>inferentially accessible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>discourse-new, hearer-old</td>
<td>unused</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>situationally accessible</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>discourse-old, hearer-old</td>
<td>textually accessible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>active</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>120</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The head of a restrictive relative construction is most often a referent that has not been introduced to the discourse before (59%), whether it is brand new ((131) and (132)), inferentially (133) or situationally (134), accessible or unused (135).
In (131) and (132) the head of the RC is a newly introduced referent. The RC serves to further specify this discourse referent. So in (131), the German white man in the ‘Uvhuntu’ story does not have just big cars, but he has a specific kind of big car. And the reference ‘other things’ in (132) would be too general a reference if the RC didn’t specify what kind of other things he didn’t receive.

In (133), ‘the money’ is an inferentially accessible referent in a ‘payment’ schema. In (134), a father and his son meet in a house. When the father refers to the house where they meet, the reference ‘this house’ is situationally accessible. Interestingly, since the head of the RCs in (133) and (134) is already in some way accessible to the reader, the restrictive RCs appear to be less needed for the reader to understand the sentence.

The text corpus has three cases of restrictive relative constructions with the negative pronoun ‘nobody’ as its head. This negative pronoun is probably best analyzed as a discourse referent already stored in the reader’s mind and is therefore categorized here as an unused discourse referent (135).

Although the use of restrictive RCs is not restricted to newly introduced referents, there is a good reason why they often do occur with these referents. If a certain discourse referent needs further specification in order to make it accessible to the reader, this specification is often only needed the first time this discourse referent is mentioned. So in (131), for instance, once the big cars have been introduced and specified, in following sentences a reference like ‘the big cars’ or ‘his pick-ups’ would be clear enough.

In 49 cases (41%), the head of the RC is a referent that has already been introduced in the discourse. In most of these cases, the discourse referent is textually accessible ((136) and (137)); in a few cases it is an active discourse participant (138).

In (136), the field has already been mentioned several times before and is thus textually accessible. In the paragraph preceding (137), the animals had made plans to meet on a certain day and dig a well together. Therefore the ‘day’ in (138) is textually accessible. In (138), ‘those’ (vhaala) refers back to the people mentioned in the preceding sentence.
There is, again, a good reason why restrictive RCs can have a head that is already textually accessible. When a discourse referent is no longer active but is reintroduced, it sometimes will need a restrictive RC to make it accessible again. This is especially the case with generic referents like 'all', 'many', or 'those'.

As I show below (section 3.2.2.3), when the head of the RC is textually accessible, the proposition given in the RC is usually already textually accessible as well.

### 3.2.2.2 The activation status of the proposition expressed in the RC

The following table summarizes the activation status of the proposition expressed in restrictive RCs in the text corpus.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>discourse/hearer-new</td>
<td></td>
<td>brand new</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inferable</td>
<td></td>
<td>inferentially accessible</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>discourse-new,</td>
<td></td>
<td>unused</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hearer-old</td>
<td></td>
<td>situationally accessible</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>discourse-old,</td>
<td></td>
<td>textually accessible</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hearer-old</td>
<td></td>
<td>active</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>120</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The proposition expressed in a restrictive RC conveys most often information that is already accessible for the reader (86%), whether it is textually ((139) and (140)), inferentially (141) or situationally (142) accessible or unused ((143) and (144)).

(139) ‘Ike nkulola zyontslk [$z[ê avhamwitu vhayanga]RC nyinza nkaani.’
‘I think everything [$our friends have said]RC is very good’.’ (Intemo 37)

(140) Avhantu [$vhê vháali pa mpungo paala]RC … vahasogola kumutangana kwi dala.
‘The people [$who were at that funeral]RC … went to meet him on the way.’ (Ishaaho 22)

(141) Iziiho [$lyê uWizimani nu mushi vhahakaataga]RC lyâli ni shitala ishipiti nkaani.
‘The room [$where Wissmann and his wife used to sleep]RC had a very big bed.’ (Uvhuntu 24)

(142) ‘Vhamwitu, mwenti [$mwê mukwimilila]RC mufumwaje insiivho…’
‘My friends, all of you [$who are standing]RC should bring up ideas…’’ (Intemo 26)

(143) Vhakwitiha kuuti vhayazi vhe vhai papiipi nu Mulungu kuluusya avhantu [$vhê vhapuuma]RC.
‘They believe that dead people are closer to God than [$people]RC.’ (Amaata 30)

(144) Inkaani lwê tukukumbuha umuluwe witu [$wê tuli nayo aha[halilizyo lha]RC].
‘Especially when we remember our enemy [$that we have these days]RC.’ (Intemo 66)

In (139), it is clear from the textual context that other trees have spoken before. Therefore the proposition expressed in the RC is textually accessible. Likewise, in (140) it has been mentioned before that people were mourning a family killed by elephants, which makes the proposition in the RC textually accessible. Remark (141) is made in a description of the house of a rich white man, Wissmann. In a ‘house-schema’, the proposition that there is a room where the owner and his wife sleep is inferentially accessible. In (142), the reference to the trees that are standing is situationally accessible for the public listening to this speech. In (143), the RC refers to a proposition that the author supposes to be known by the reader—the fact that living people exist. In the same way, in (144) the author assumes that the fact that we have an enemy these days is known by his reader.
The finding that restrictive RCs usually contain information that the author assumes to be already known by the reader is in line with what Wiesmann (2000) and Hollenbach and Watters (1998) concluded. The function of these clauses is not to provide further information about the referent they are attached to, but rather to make them accessible to the reader and this is most easily done with information that the reader already knows.

Nevertheless, it is not impossible for a restrictive RC to contain brand-new information. The text corpus has 16 cases where the proposition expressed in the restrictive RC is brand-new.

(145) UHalulu ahasogola ku shifula nu lufulu lwa kutapila aminzi, havhili na hafulu ahansi\textsuperscript{H} [he hááli nu vhwushi]\textsuperscript{RC}.

‘Rabbit went to the well with a bucket for fetching water and a \textit{small bucket}\textsuperscript{H} [that contained honey]\textsuperscript{RC}.’ (Uvhushewu 59)

In (145), the proposition expressed in the RC is brand new to the discourse and to the hearer. When an RC contains brand-new information, it is sometimes not easy to decide whether it should be interpreted as restrictive or non-restrictive. The following two examples may serve to illustrate this.

(146) Vhinji vhakugombela \textit{iviholanyo}\textsuperscript{H} [vwê na vhanu avhafuma mu Vhulaya vhakuvilondola]\textsuperscript{RC}.

‘Many make \textit{idols}\textsuperscript{H} [that even people from Europe are looking for]\textsuperscript{RC}.’ (Intemo 30; see also (83) and (110))

(147) ‘Ne taata winyu navhiita mwe pe ndi na mazwi gamo nu Zyunga\textsuperscript{H} [gê naaga kuuti ntangamuvhuuza neeka]\textsuperscript{RC}.

‘“I, your father have called you because I have \textit{certain words for Zyunga}\textsuperscript{H}, [that I thought I cannot tell him myself]\textsuperscript{RC}.”’ (Kwimala 2)

The RC in (146) can be interpreted as narrowing down the possible reference of the noun ‘idols’, i.e. it is only a specific type of idols that is been made. But it can also be interpreted as providing further information about the idols that are being made. Likewise, the RC in (147) can be read as narrowing down the possible reference of ‘words’, i.e. it is a specific kind of words that he has to share, or as giving further information about the words he is going to share.

At this point, we must recall the before mentioned distinction made by Lambrecht between presupposition and assertion. In a restrictive RC the author does not aim to do an assertion in the first place, but he uses a piece of information to help his reader identify a discourse referent (1994:51). However, if the proposition expressed in the RC still has a high information value for the reader, the clause is more likely to be read as an assertion and thus as a non-restrictive RC.

3.2.2.3 The relation between the activation status of the head of the RC and the proposition in the RC

Like non-restrictive relative constructions, restrictive relative constructions also show a strong correlation between the activation status of the head of the RC and the proposition expressed in the RC. The following tables show the correlation between the activation status of the head of the RC and the proposition in the RC for the parameters discourse-old/new (table 7) and hearer-old/new (table 8).

Table 7. Correlation between information status of head of RC and proposition in RC: in the discourse

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Head of the RC</th>
<th>Proposition in RC</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>discourse-old (49)</td>
<td>discourse-old (42)</td>
<td>86%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>discourse-new (7)</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>discourse-new (71)</td>
<td>discourse-old (1)</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>discourse-new (70)</td>
<td>99%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 8. Correlation between information status of head of MC and proposition in RC: for the hearer

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Head of the RC</th>
<th>Proposition in RC</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>hearer-old (61)</td>
<td>hearer-old (57)</td>
<td>93%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>hearer-new (4)</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hearer-new (59)</td>
<td>hearer-old (44)</td>
<td>75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>hearer-new (15)</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When the head of the RC is new to the discourse, in 99% of the cases the proposition in the RC is new to the discourse as well. The reason for this becomes clear when we look at an example.


‘The most important work’ [that the people of the Nyiha tribe do] RC is the work of farming.’ (Amaata 6)

As the single function of the information in the restrictive RC is to narrow down the possible reference of the discourse referent in the MC, there is usually no reason why the author would have used this information already before. It is not impossible, though, that the author wants to explain that a previously introduced proposition applies to a newly introduced referent. This is the case in the only case in the text corpus where a restrictive RC with discourse-old information is attached to a discourse-new referent.

(149)  *Atálipo nawuumo* [wê áfumwizye insiivho izya kumala intamwo zyavho] RC.

‘There was nobody [who came up with an idea of how to end their difficulties].’ (Intemo 34; see also (135))

In the paragraph before (149), the narrator states that the trees are having a meeting in which they discuss the problems they have with their enemy Axe. The chairman of the meeting asks if anyone has any ideas about how to end their problems. In (149) a new, unused discourse referent, ‘nobody’, is introduced in a sentence with presentational articulation. The narrator states that the already introduced proposition of a possible being ending their problems applies to this referent.

On the other hand, discourse-old referents in the MC tend to get a restrictive RC with a proposition that is discourse-old as well (87%). Most naturally an author will use already introduced material to narrow down an already introduced referent.

(150)  *Isiku* [lyê vhivwine] RC lihafiha.

‘The day [that they had agreed on] came.’ (Uvhushevu 22; see also (137))

The author has told us before that the trees agreed on a day that they would meet again. Here this day is reintroduced and further specified with already known information.

It is not impossible, though, for an author to narrow down an already introduced referent with an RC expressing a discourse-new proposition (13%).

(151)  *Havhili vhámusufiizye kuuti mwana* [wê atangavhaavwa imbombo niimo] RC.

‘They also looked down on him, that he was a child [who was not able to help them in anything].’ (Ishikunzi 10)

In the context of (151), the child (Shaali) was already introduced, but here it is mentioned that he is a child of a specific kind. This further specification is new to the discourse and given in a restrictive RC.

[^11]: A possible exception might be sentences with argument focus. One could make up a context like ‘There are different things that the people of the Nyiha tribe do. The most important work that they do, is...’ As the text corpus does not have relative constructions that are structured this way, it is unclear whether this would be considered natural in Nyiha.
From the perspective of the hearer, both hearer-old and hearer-new discourse referents in the MC tend to get a RC with a proposition that is already known by the hearer. The reason for this is, as argued in section 3.2.2.2, that it is unusual for restrictive RCs to convey information that is not known yet by the hearer in one or another way.

It can be concluded, then, that Levinsohn’s observation for some languages, that restrictive RCs tend to contain brand-new information when their head is an already established discourse referent (2007:154) does not hold true for Nyiha: both discourse-new and hearer-new RCs usually have a head that is new as well. When a discourse referent is already established in the discourse, the information that is needed to narrow down its possible reference is already established as well.

### 3.3 The activation status of information in adverbial RCs

In section 2.5, it was shown that adverbial RCs introduced by lwê (‘when’) and mwê (‘because’) can either precede or follow the MC. Levinsohn notes that in many languages there is a relation between the activation status of information in a subordinate clause and its position with regard to the main clause.

My own experience is that brand-new information may be presented in post-nuclear subordinate clauses in most languages. It is common, however, to encounter severe restrictions on the introduction of brand-new information in pre-nuclear subordinate clauses in natural texts (2007:147).

In this section, I analyze the activation status of information in adverbial RCs introduced by lwê or mwê and see whether there is a relation with their position with respect to the MC.

#### 3.3.1 Clauses introduced by lwê

The text corpus has examples of lwê introducing an adverbial clause that either precedes the MC (i.e. pre-nuclear), or follows the MC (i.e. post-nuclear). Table 9 shows the distribution of both types of lwê-clauses, according to the activation status of the proposition they contain.

#### Table 9. The activation status of information expressed in pre-nuclear and post-nuclear lwê-clauses.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activation status</th>
<th>Pre-nuclear</th>
<th>Post-nuclear</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>discourse/hearer-new</td>
<td>brand new</td>
<td>1 2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>inferable</td>
<td>inferentially accessible</td>
<td>31 60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>discourse-new, hearer-old</td>
<td>unused</td>
<td>6 11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>situationally accessible</td>
<td>0 0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>discourse-old, hearer-old</td>
<td>textually accessible</td>
<td>4 8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>active</td>
<td>10 19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>52 100% (87% of total)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Most often, a temporal clause introduced by lwê precedes the MC. In 60% of the cases such a clause gives in inferentially accessible information. Typically, the temporal clause marks a new step in a certain schema taking place anterior to (3.53 and 3.54) or simultaneous with (3.55) a new main event that is narrated in the MC (anteriority is marked by a present perfective tense, simultaneity by a present continuous tense; see section 2.5.1). The following examples mark all a next step in a ‘traveling schema’.

(152) lwê vhapalamila kukwinjila mu nkaaya yaavho, vhahiivwa a vhantu vhakulosya.  
‘When they had come close to entering their town, they heard people mourning.’ (Ishaaho 19)

(153) lwê vhaafiha pa nyumba ya maama waavho, vháazile nuumo...  
‘When they arrived at their grandmother’s home, they found out that she was not there...’ (Ishikunzi 22)
In four cases (8%), information that is inferentially accessible happens to be mentioned in the text before and is thus in fact textually accessible.

This sentence occurs in the final paragraph of the ‘Ishaaho’ narrative, where the whole story is summarized. As with the inferentially accessible clauses above, this temporal clause marks a new step in the narrative that anticipates a new main event. But since the paragraph retells the story as it was narrated before, the information in the temporal clause is already textually accessible.

Related to this type of pre-nuclear temporal clauses are pre-nuclear clauses that provide active information (19%). The event in the temporal clause does not mark a new step in a schema, but recapitulates a step that was just narrated. Again, a present perfective tense in the temporal clause marks anteriority to the event in the MC (156), while simultaneity is marked by a present continuous tense (157).

The subordinate clauses in both (156) and (157) recapitulate information that was just narrated in the preceding sentence.

In one case (2%), a pre-nuclear temporal clause conveys brand-new information. In (159), the event reported in the subordinate clause is entirely new in the discourse. Here it is natural, though, for the subordinate clause to precede the MC, as the event it describes precedes the event described in the MC as well. Putting this event in a subordinate clause rather than in a main clause on its own sets it back from the main story line, as it is only introductory to the answer given in the main clause.

In some cases, the temporal clause introduced by lwê follows the MC. In the text corpus this never happens when the information expressed in the subordinate clause has already been introduced in the discourse, but is the preferred position for clauses carrying brand-new information.

In two cases, the information in the post-nuclear subordinate clause is inferentially accessible. One example is given in (161).
More examples from natural texts would be needed to find out the difference between pre-nuclear and post-nuclear clauses carrying inferentially accessible information.

### 3.3.2 Clauses introduced by mwê

As analyzed in section 2.5.4, the causal conjunction mwê in Nyiha can be used both anaphorically (post-nuclear, offering a reason for a statement in the preceding MC) and cataphorically (pre-nuclear, offering a reason for a statement in the following MC) in Nyiha. The following table gives an overview of the information status of both anaphoric and cataphoric mwê-clauses in the text corpus.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activation status</th>
<th>Anaphoric</th>
<th>Cataphoric</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>discourse/hearer-new</td>
<td>brand new</td>
<td>25  89%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>inferable</td>
<td>inferentially accessible</td>
<td>0  0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>discourse-new, hearer-old</td>
<td>unused</td>
<td>0  0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>situationally accessible</td>
<td>1  4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>discourse-old, hearer-old</td>
<td>textually accessible</td>
<td>2  7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>active</td>
<td>0  0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>28  100%</td>
<td>5  100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As table 10 shows, causal clauses introduced by mwê have a strong tendency to present brand-new information, and this brand-new information is always presented anaphorically. See examples (162) and (163).

(162) Avhakulu vhakwe lwe vhamulola vhávisiitwe nkaani, mwê vhatahanzaga kujenda nu tonko.

‘When his brothers saw him they were very angry, because they didn’t want to walk with a blind person.’
(Ishikunzi 18)

(163) Vhahataliha kulya, kumwela nu kupunza, mwê pe vhávheenyi kuuti amayimba gaavho aga minzi vhagamala.

‘They started to eat, drink and play together, because they thought that their water problems had ended.’
(Uvhushevu 54)

In (162), the causal clause offers a reason for the brothers being angry with their blind brother. Although this reason would not surprise a reader in the context of the story, it is still new information. In (163), the animals have been digging a well together. After finishing, they start having fun together and the reason for their relaxing is given in the subordinate clause. This is new (but again not totally unexpected) information for the reader.

If mwê-clauses present information that is already known to the reader, it might still be presented in an anaphoric causal clause ((164) and (165)), but in this case a cataphoric causal clause ((166) and (167)) is also possible.

(164) ‘Mwevheeyi nkulaavha munkovhoshele, mwê pe navhatamwa.’

‘Friends, I ask you to forgive me, because I have disturbed you’. (Kwimala 1)

(165) Avhinji vhahalola kuuti uShipinyi angavha mulugu wa kwanda, mwê wamwavho.

‘Many thought that Handle could be their biggest enemy, because he was their relative.’ (Intemo 53)

(166) ...îleelo mwê vhápeliine ishilapo vhahajendeelela kuvha nu lusuhilo lwa kugaaga aminzi.

‘... but since they had sworn to each other, they continued to hope to find water.’ (Uvhushevu 45)

(167) Ileelo mwê uMukookwa atamanyile kujenda, akuteteeha vhweelele, akupootwa kumulema uHalulu.

‘But since Tortoise cannot walk, he can only crawl, he fails to catch Rabbit.’ (UHalulu 41)
In (164), uttered in direct speech, the subordinate clause offers information that is situationally accessible to the listeners. The proposition in the subordinate clause in (165) is textually accessible to the reader, because it was mentioned before that Handle was a relative. The proposition in the subordinate clause in (166) was mentioned before as well and is therefore textually accessible for the reader. The subordinate clause in (167) offers unused information for the average Nyiha reader.

More data are needed to see if there is a difference between anaphoric and cataphoric mwê-clauses presenting hearer-old information.

4 Conclusion, recommendations and suggestions for further research

The aim of this paper was twofold. First, I discussed the syntax and semantics of relativization in Nyiha. Second, I analyzed the activation status of information in Nyiha relative constructions. In this section I summarize my findings. I conclude with a brief discussion of the relevance of this research for (Bible) translation and some suggestions for further research.

4.1 The syntax and semantics of relativization in Nyiha

In section 2, I discussed the syntax and semantics of relativization in Nyiha. After outlining a theoretical framework in section 2.1, I discussed the canonical relative construction in section 2.2. The head of a relative construction in Nyiha can be realized by a range of syntactic categories: examples were given of a common and a proper noun, a demonstrative and a personal pronoun, a subject and an object affix on the verb and an adverb functioning as head. It is also possible that the head of a relative construction gets zero realization in the MC. Both the head of a relative construction (in the MC) and the relative pronoun (in the RC) can fill several grammatical functions as well: they can serve as a subject, an object, an indirect or oblique object, a possessive modifier and an adverbial adjunct.

Section 2.3 explored complex constructions. Evidence was given that both stacking and embedding are allowed techniques in the formation of relative constructions in Nyiha. I also gave examples of cleft and pseudo-cleft constructions.

Section 2.4 dealt with the difference between restrictive and non-restrictive relative constructions. I discussed two differences between these two types of relative constructions in Nyiha: prosody/intonation and specificity. Non-restrictive constructions in Nyiha have a comma intonation following the head of the construction, whereas restrictive relative constructions have one intonation contour for the head together with the RC. A second difference concerns the specificity of the head of a relative construction. As a rule, a non-restrictive RC has a specific head, whereas a restrictive RC has a head that is in itself unspecific, but specified in the restrictive RC.

In section 2.5 I discussed four types of adverbial relative clauses in further detail.

4.2 Differences in the activation status of information in relative constructions

In section 3, I analyzed the activation status of information in Nyiha relative constructions. First, I examined three observations made by Wiesmann (2000), Levinsohn (2007) and Hollenbach and Watters (1998):
1. Restrictive RCs (usually) do not contain brand-new information (Wiesmann, and Hollenbach and Watters).
2. Alternatively, if a restrictive RC does contain new information, the head of the RC is established information (Levinsohn).
3. Non-restrictive RCs usually contain brand-new information (Hollenbach and Watters)

(1) This observation appeared to be true for Nyiha. In restrictive RCs, there is a strong tendency to present information that is already accessible to the reader in one or another way (84% of the restrictive RCs). This is explained by the function of restrictive RCs: they are used to make a discourse referent accessible to the reader, and this of course is most easily done by information that is already easily accessible itself. It was shown, though, that it is not impossible for a restrictive RC to convey brand-new
information. In these cases, the restrictive RC can be ambiguous, as it gives the impression of making an assertion about its head, which in fact is the function of a non-restrictive RC.

(2) This observation is not true for Nyiha. In the texts that were analyzed, there was a strong correlation between the activation status of the head of a relative construction and of the proposition expressed in the RC, both in restrictive and non-restrictive constructions. This means that, in 79% of the (few) cases that a restrictive RC conveyed brand-new information, the head of the relative construction was brand new as well: when a discourse referent is newly introduced, any information used to narrow down its possible reference is most naturally new as well. For an already established discourse referent, the information used to narrow down its possible reference is also likely to be already established.

(3) Hollenbach and Watter’s observation that non-restrictive RCs usually contain new information is true for Nyiha. In the text corpus, in 77% of the cases the information expressed in a non-restrictive RC is new to the discourse. This is explained by the function of non-restrictive RCs: they usually provide (new) background information about a newly introduced referent (in five (23%) cases a non-restrictive RC expressed discourse-old information, but three of them are for various reasons atypical. See section 3.2.1.1 for a discussion of all five cases).

Section 3.3 explored the activation status of information in two types of adverbial RCs: temporal clauses introduced by lwê and causal clauses introduced by mwê. Levinsohn’s observation, that pre-nuclear subordinate clauses present information that is already accessible to the reader, while brand-new information may be presented in a post-nuclear subordinate clause (2007:147), was shown to be true for both types of adverbial clauses. Clauses introduced by lwê most often precede the MC and present information that is already accessible to the reader. When they follow the MC, they are more likely to present brand-new information. Clauses introduced by mwê usually follow the MC, and as such present brand-new information. When they precede the MC, they present information that is already accessible to the reader.

4.3 Recommendations for (Bible) translation

In this section I give some recommendations for (Bible) translation, resulting from my research. Note that these recommendations apply primarily to Nyiha, but may be relevant for other Bantu languages as well.

I. In the text corpus used for this research, a non-restrictive RC typically introduces a new discourse participant to the discourse. In such cases, it modifies a new discourse participant and presents information about this discourse participant that is new to the discourse as well. This means that, if a translation has a non-restrictive RC modifying an already introduced referent, or providing information that is already textually accessible, it is recommended to check if this is considered natural by mother-tongue speakers and to test in the community if the construction is still understood as being non-restrictive.

II. The text corpus shows that restrictive RCs as a rule contain information that is already accessible to the reader. If a translation has a restrictive RC containing brand-new information, the clause is more likely to be interpreted as an assertion about the head of the construction and thus as a non-restrictive RC. In these cases, proper testing of the translation in the community is again recommended.

III. In a Bible translation for a semiliterate community, the use of short sentences is generally recommended. One technique sometimes used to break up long sentences is to take a restrictive RC out of the MC and put the proposition it expresses in a separate sentence with a topic-comment structure. However, as discussed in section 3.1, the function of a restrictive RC is not to make an assertion about a discourse referent. This means that putting the proposition of a restrictive RC in a separate sentence changes the function of this proposition in the discourse. An example from the Nyiha Bible translation can serve to illustrate this.
Umuntu wonti we alishipuuta ishitanzi ni shiholanyo shaakwe, nu kuposheela ishimanyilo pa sheeni shaakwe, poosye ku nyoovhe yaakwe, uweene alimwela idivaayi iyamwavho inkali ye vhuhalazu uvhwa Mulungu.

‘Any person who worships the first beast and his statue, and receives the mark on his forehead, or on his hand, he will drink the other strong wine, which is God’s anger.’ (Revelation 14:9b, 10a)

At some point during the translation process, it was discussed whether it would be an option to break this sentence up as follows (in translation):

‘Some people might worship the first beast and his statue, and receive the mark on their forehead, or on their hand. Those people will drink the other strong wine, which is God’s anger.’ (Revelation 14:9b, 10a)

The point I want to make here is not that breaking up a sentence in this way is incorrect. But a translation team must be aware that the function of the original proposition is changed from being presupposed to being asserted.

IV. A similar observation applies to non-restrictive RCs. As mentioned in section 2.1, they usually provide introductory or background material. Taking this material out of the MC and putting it in a separate sentence might give it more prominence than originally intended by the author. Again, an example from the Nyiha Bible translation illustrates this nicely.

Mwe vhamwitu, mwe uMulungu avhakunzite, tumanyile kuuti uMulungu avhasavhuuye kuvha mwe vhantu vhaakwe.

‘You my friends, whom God loves, we know that God has chosen you to be his people.’ (1 Thessalonians 1:4)

When this verse was discussed in a final translation check, it was questioned if the RC would really be understood as non-restrictive by the reader. It was proposed to change it to the following.

‘You my friends, God loves you. We know that God has chosen you to be his people.’ (1 Thessalonians 1:4)

Again, this is not to say that such a modification would be a bad decision. But it is evident that in this proposal the information from the RC gets more prominence than it had in the original translation. It is important for a translation team to be aware of this.

4.4 Suggestions for further research

This investigation into relative constructions in Nyiha was necessarily very narrow, and therefore further study of the syntax, semantics and discourse features of relative constructions in Nyiha is recommended. The following are some suggestions of areas where further research is needed.

I. As this research focused on written discourse, I have not investigated the prosodic means that play a role in marking relative constructions and help in marking a non-restrictive relative construction. Especially relevant is the question whether the observed prosodic phrase boundary following the head of a non-restrictive relative construction does occur in oral discourse. If that is the case, it would be strongly recommended to use a comma for marking a non-restrictive RC in written discourse (which to some extent is already practiced). I have heard Nyiha speakers using comma intonation as a means to mark a non-restrictive relative construction, but I also have the impression that such intonation is not (always) used with very short non-restrictive constructions.

II. The amount of non-restrictive relative constructions in the text corpus used is not high (22 cases). Therefore, as mentioned in section 3.2.1, care must be taken in drawing conclusions about the activation status of information in this type of relative constructions. Further research in a bigger text corpus would be needed to test the conclusions drawn in this paper.

III. In the area of adverbial RCs, discussed in section 2.5, more research is needed as to the difference between adverbial clauses introduced by shê or lwê. The text corpus did not have enough cases of shê introducing an adverbial clause to establish its exact function.
IV. Another topic only briefly touched on in this paper is the (discourse) function of cleft and pseudo-cleft constructions. The function of the relative construction in clefts and pseudo-clefts is clearly different from canonical relative constructions. Again, more research is needed in this area.
References


