

# Relative Clause

Let us first learn the terminologies that are used for the RC before we start the discussion:

## 1. Terminology

**RC** (also known as  $S_{Rel}$ ): the relative clause

**HN** (also known as NP<sub>matx</sub>, domain noun): the Head noun in the RC which expresses the domain of relativization.

**Relative-Pro** (also known as NP<sub>Rel</sub>): the noun which is relativized

[ The boy<sub>HN</sub> [ who<sub>RelPro</sub> is standing at the gate ]<sub>S-Rel</sub> is my brother.]]

## 2. Definition

**Restrictive relative clause** is defined as;

“A relative clause [restrictive relative clause] is a **subordinate clause** which **delimits/restricts the reference** of an NP by specifying the role/ referent of that NP in the situation described by the RC.”  
(Andrews (2004: 1)

**Non-restrictive relative clause** is defined as;

“A clause which does not restrict the reference of the head-NP that it modifies but stands in **apposition** to it” (Binkert (1997)

# Relative Clause

So, a relative clause is a kind of **dependent clause** which helps to modify a Noun.

Thus, in many linguistics book, the topic is also mentioned under 'Noun modification' section.

A relative clause in English has 'relative pronouns', incidentally a wh-word such as '..who, what, where, whom, when etc. and also 'that' as the subject of the clause which is co-referential with subject of the **main clause** .

A relative clause, as we have mentioned, basically modifies a noun and it is because of this function of RC, it is also sometimes termed as 'adjectival clause'.

For Example:

[<sub>s1</sub>**The boy<sub>i</sub>** [<sub>s2</sub>**who<sub>i</sub> is standing at the gate**] **is my brother**]].

We must understand the classification of RCs on the basis of the occurrence of their 'head-NP'.

The head noun which is the subject of the matrix clause as well as the co-indexed subject of the relative clause can occur out-side the relative clause.

Such RCs are called **externally headed** relative clauses. In English, we can give the following example:

**[<sub>s1</sub>The boy<sub>i</sub> [<sub>s2</sub>who<sub>i</sub> is standing at the gate] is my brother]].**

The *externally headed* relative clause is further divided into other *subgroup*;

a. **Prenominal i.e.  $S_{\text{Rel}} + Np_{\text{head}}$**  (also known as head final RC)

a. **Post-nominal RC i.e.  $Np_{\text{head}} + S_{\text{rel}}$**  (known as head initial RC)

**a. Prenominal** i.e.  $S_{\text{Rel}} + Np_{\text{head}}$  (also known as head final RC)

Chinese:

[<sub>RC</sub> Chuan wazi de] mei-ge xuesheng dou shi tiaowude.  
wear socks DE every-CL student all are dancers  
'Every student that wears socks is a dancer.' Gobbo 2005

\*[Which I like] the clothes <sub>HN</sub> is expensive]].

Hindi:

[jo mẽ pəsənd kər-ta hũ] vo kəpərə məhəŋe hẽ]]  
which I-Nom like do-asp be-1MS that clothes expensive be-3Pl  
'The clothes which I like are expensive'.

b. **Post-nominal RC** i.e.  $Np_{head} + S_{rel}$  (known as head initial RC)  
For example: (English)

[The clothes <sub>HN</sub> [which I like] is expensive]].

Hindi:

[vo kəpərə [jo mẽ pəsənd kər-ta hũ] məhəŋe hẽ]]  
that clothes which I-Nom like do-asp be-1MS expensive be-3Pl  
'The clothes which I like are expensive'.

Another type of relative clause based on the position of the head of the RC is known as **internally headed** relative clauses.

[ $S_{Mx}$ ... [ $S_{Rel}$ ..... NP<head>.....].....]

As the term suggests, the head in this type of RC is located in the relative clause itself.

For example, in Tibetan:

[peemɛ        thep        khill-pa        the]        nee        yin.  
peemɛ(ERG) **book**(ABS) carry-PART the(ABS) I(GEN) be  
 ‘The book Peem carried is mine.’ (Keenan:1985: 161)

In **Quechua** (Southern Colombia to Chile)

[Nuna bestya-ta    ranti-shqa-n] alli        bestya-m    ka-rqo-n.  
man    **horse-ACC** buy-PERF-3    good    horse-EVID be-PAST-3  
 ‘The horse that the man bought was a good horse.’ (Vries 2002: 4)

Hindi:

1.	[ <u>vo</u> ləɾkə	[ <u>jo</u> geɽ-pər	<u>khəɽɑ</u> hɛ]	<u>mera</u>	<u>b<sup>h</sup>ai</u>	hɛ]]
	Rel boy-3MS-Nom	CoRel door-Loc	stand-IMP-3MS Be-Pres	my	brother-3MS	be-Pres
	[‘The boy [who is standing at the gate] is my brother’.]]					

1a.	[ <u>vo</u> ø <sub>i</sub>	[ <u>jo</u> ləɾkə <sub>i</sub> geɽ-pər	<u>khəɽɑ</u> hɛ]	<u>mera</u>	<u>b<sup>h</sup>ai</u>	hɛ]]
	RelP	CoRel boy-3MS-Nom door-Loc	stand-IMP-3MS Be-Pres	my	brother-3MS	be-Pres
	[‘The boy [who is standing at the gate] is my brother’.]]					

# NPAH by Keenan and Comrie-1977

There is a seminal paper by Keenan and Comrie called 'Noun Phrase Accessibility Hierarchy' published in 1977 which discussed the order in which NPs can be relativized.

The order of hierarchy is given below;

subject > direct object > indirect object > oblique > genitive > object of comparison

It has been proven with explanation that languages obey this hierarchy with regard to relativizing their NPs typologically.

Meaning, if a language can relativize its 'oblique object', it can never be the case, it can't relativize Sub, DO and IO.

However, the vice-versa is not attested in the languages with regard to the strategy of relativization.

Let us examine some examples and see how this hierarchy works!

# NPAH by Keenan and Comrie-1977

In Malagasy (Keenan (1972:171) the subject is relativized as;

1.	<u>manasa</u>	<u>ny</u>	<u>lamba</u>	<u>ny</u>	<u>vehivahy</u>	
	wash	the	clothes	the	women	
	‘The woman is washing the clothes’					

1a.	<u>ny</u>	<u>vehivahy</u>	<u>izay</u>	<u>manasa</u>	<u>lamba</u>	<u>ny</u>
	the	woman	who	wash	women	the
	‘The woman who is washing the clothes.....’					

However, the relativization of direct object is not grammatical in the same context;

*1b.	<u>ny</u>	<u>lamba</u>	<u>izay</u>	<u>manasa</u>	<u>vehivahy</u>	<u>ny</u>
	the	clothes	who	wash	women	the
	‘The woman who is washing the clothes.....’					

It is said that this sentence would mean that the clothes are washing the women!

It is so because in order to relativize the DO, Malagasy uses a passive like construction.

For example;



Consider the following examples to understand the point;

a. Sasan-'ny vehivahy ny lamba  
wash(PASS)-the woman the clothes  
'The clothes are washed by the woman'

With this, we can now relativize the DO in Malagasy as follows:

b. ny lamba (izay) sasan-'ny vehivahy  
the clothes (that) wash(PASS)-the woman  
'the clothes that are washed by the woman'

In order to relativize an instrumental NP, Malagasy uses an 'instrumental passive'.

At first, an instrumental NP appears overtly as subject in the main clause and then it is omitted as NPrel in next sentence. See the examples;

a. Manasa lamba amin-'ny savony Rasoa  
wash clothes with-the soap Rasoa  
'Rasoa is washing the clothes with the soap'

b. Anasan-dRasoa lamba ny savony  
wash(INSTR.PASS)-Rasoa clothes the soap  
'The soap was used to wash clothes by Rasoa'

c. ny savony (izay) anasan-dRasoa lamba  
the soap (that) wash(INSTR.PASS)-Rasoa clothes  
'the soap that Rasoa washed clothes with'

# Strategies of relativization in Hindi

## 1. The relativization of the Subject:

1.	[vo ləɾka	[jo geɫ-pər	khəɾa	hɛ]	mera	b <sup>h</sup> ai	hɛ]]
	<u>Rel</u> boy-3MS-Nom	<u>CoRel</u> door- <u>Loc</u>	stand- <u>Imp</u> -3MS	Be- <u>Pres</u>	my	brother-3MS	be- <u>Pres</u>
	[‘The boy [who is standing at the gate] is my brother’.]]						

As we can see that the NP 'boy' functions as the subject of the sentence and it has been relativized.

## 2. The relativization of the direct object:

2.	[vo ləɾka	[jis-ko	ap-ne	bəʒar-mẽ	dek <sup>h</sup> a t <sup>h</sup> a]	mera	b <sup>h</sup> ai	hɛ]]
	Rel boy-3MS	who-Acc	you-2H-Erg	marker-Loc	see-Perf-3S Be-Pst-3S	my	brother	Be-Pres
	[‘The boy <u>who</u> (m) you saw in the market] is my brother’.]]							

The verb in the sentence is a transitive one and thus the ‘patient’ of the transitive verb is the direct object and that is what has been relativized in the above sentence.

### 3. The relativization of the indirect object:

3.	[ <u>vo</u> ləɾka	[ jɪs- <u>ko</u>	ap-ne	p <sup>h</sup> əl	dɪya]	<u>mera</u>	b <sup>h</sup> ai	hɛ]]
	Rel boy-3MS-Obl-Dat	who-Acc	you-2H-Erg	fruit-Acc	give-Perf-3S	my	brother	Be-Pres
	[‘The boy <u>who(m)</u> you gave the fruit] is my brother’.]]							

# Strategies of relativization in Hindi

## 4. The relativization of the Instrumental object: [ oblique obj]

4.	[ <u>vo</u> <u>čaku</u>	[ <u>jis-se</u>	ap-ne	p <sup>h</sup> əl	kaṭa]	bəhut	māhəŋa	hɛ]]
	<u>Rel</u> knife-3MS	which- <u>Inst</u>	you-2H-Erg	fruit- <u>Acc</u>	cut-Perf-3S	very	expensive	Be- <u>Pres</u>
	[‘The knife [which you cut the fruit with] is very expensive’.]]							

Unlike, Malagasy, Hindi manages the relativization process by placing the required case-suffix on the correlative pronouns.

## 5. The relativization of Locative object:

5.	[ <u>vo</u> səhər	[ <u>jəhā</u>	mē	rəhəta	<u>hū</u> ]	bəhut	č <sup>h</sup> otə	hɛ]]
	<u>Rel</u> town	where- <u>Loc</u>	I-1MS-Nom	stay-Imp-1MS	Be-Pres-1MS	very	small	Be- <u>Pres</u>
	[‘The town [where I live in] is very small’.]]							

Let’s see one more example for locative object:

6.	[ <u>vo</u> <u>kursi</u>	[ <u>jis-pe</u>	ap	kal	bəṭ <sup>h</sup> e t <sup>h</sup> e]	<u>ṭut</u>	<u>gəyi</u>	hɛ]]
	<u>Rel</u> chair-3FS	which- <u>Loc</u>	you-2HS-Nom	yesterday	sit-Imp-2HS Be- <u>Pst-H</u>	break	go- <u>Perf-F</u>	be- <u>Pres</u>
	[‘The chair [on which you sat yesterday] is/has broken’.]]							

Let us see one more oblique object i.e. the ablative object and then discuss about the hierarchy and move on!



# Strategies of relativization in Hindi

## 6. The relativization of ablative object:

7.	[ <u>vo</u> pətte	[ <u>jo</u>	per-se	ʃ <sup>h</sup> əre	t <sup>h</sup> e]	suk <sup>h</sup>	gəye	hẽ]]
	Rel leaves	CoRel	tree-Abl	fall-3Pl	Be-Pl	dry-V1	go-Perf-3Pl	Be-Pres-Pl
	[‘The leaves [that fell from the tree] have dried up’.]]							

All the above examples show that Hindi follows the accessibility hierarchy of relativization proposed by Keenan and Comrie (1977).

Let’s see two more form of relativizations and then we will move on;

## 7. The relativization of genitive object:

8.	[ <u>vo</u> ʈopi	[ <u>jo</u>	rəmeš-ki	pəsəɖɪɖa	t <sup>h</sup> i ]	k <sup>h</sup> o	gəyi	he
	Rel cap-3SF	CoRel	Ramesh-Gen	favourite	Be-Pst-3F	lost-V1	go-Perf-3FS	Be-Pres
	[‘The cap [that was Ramesh’s favourite] is lost’.]]							

## 8. The relativization of object of comparison:

9.	[ <u>vo</u> ləɾka	[ <u>jo</u>	dɪneš-se	ləmba	t <sup>h</sup> a ]	senə-mẽ	b <sup>h</sup> ərti	ho gəya
	Rel boy-3MS	CoRel	Dinesh-M Comp	tall	Be-Pst-3Ms	army-Loc	select	be-v1 go-Perf-3MS
	[‘The boy who was taller than Dinesh ] was selected in the army’.]]							

## Restrictive VS. Non-restrictive RC

A relative clause essentially is a device to restrict the meaning and reference of the Noun that it modifies.

Thus, most of the relative clauses in their default form would be termed as 'Restrictive Relative Clause'.

For example:

**[The student [who borrowed my book] was very smart]].**

A non-restrictive relative clause is that relative clause in which we use some grammatical techniques to have the interpretation of 'non-restrictiveness'.

With the help of these techniques or devices, the referential-ity of or restrictiveness of the relative clause is de-activated.

English does it by using two commas. For example:

**[The student, who borrowed my book, was very smart]].**

# Form and Function of Nonrestrictive Relative Clauses

Non-restrictive relative clauses should be thought of as “optional info” but helpful and it is in contrast with essential information that appears in restrictive relative clauses.

It makes sense that non-restrictive relative clauses are formatted differently. Denham and Lobeck (2014) illustrate how "**Non-restrictive relative clauses**" are usually set off by commas in writing, and you can usually detect 'comma intonation' in a speaker's voice, distinguishing the two types.

*Restrictive:*

[ **The paint** [*which Mary bought at the hardware store*] **was bright red**]].

*Non-restrictive:*

**The paint**, *which Mary bought at the hardware store*, **was bright red**.

The restrictive relative clause “*which Mary bought at the hardware store*”, limits which paint we're referring to, namely ‘the paint’ which Mary bought at the hardware store.

The non-restrictive relative clause, on the other hand, does not restrict the reference of the noun *paint*; it is not information that distinguishes the paint from other paint.

That Mary bought this paint at the hardware store is simply incidental information," (Denham and Lobeck 2014).

# Non-Restrictive relative clauses

- Examples:

- My brother, who lives in Bangalore, is a doctor.



non- restrictive relative clauses

- She works in SONY, which makes Play-Station.



non- restrictive relative clauses

- Definition: non- restrictive relative clauses are those relative clauses in which the information is additional and thus not essential  
→ These types of relative clauses do not tell you which person or thing the speakers mean when they use such relative clauses. We already know which thing or person is meant in such constructions.

Examples:

- My brother, who lives in Bangalore, is a doctor.
- (the underlined part of the sentence is an additional information about my brother)
- She works in SONY, which makes Play-station.
- (the underlined part of the sentence is an extra information about Sony company)



## Examples:

### – Restrictive relative clauses

- That man is the person whose daughter got married to a very rich old man.
- They went to a park where they can find peaceful atmosphere to study.

### – Non-Restrictive relative clauses

- My bother, whose daughter married to a very old rich man, is very upset.
- They went to that park, where they can find peaceful atmosphere, to study.

# Differences

## **Restrictive relative clauses**

We do not use comma in these clauses.

- We can use “that” instead of “who” or “which”.
- You can leave out that/who/which when it is the object
- We do not often use “whom” in this type of clause

## **Non-Restrictive relative clauses**

- We use comma in these clauses.
- You can not use “that” in non-defining clauses
- You can not leave out “who” or “which”
- You can use “whom” when it is the object.

## Full fledged Relative Clause VS Reduced Relative Clause

a. A full relative clause is that relative clause in which the subject of the relative clause is present and it functions as the head of the matrix clause and is co-indexed with the subject of the embedded clause i.e. the relative clause.

For example:

[The glass [which<sub>Subj of RC</sub> I broke] was very expensive]].

This type of relative clause is called a 'full fledged relative clause'.

b. Reduced Relative clause is that relative clause in which the subject of the relative clause might not be overtly mentioned and thus there is a 'Gap' in strategy of modifying the intended noun and thus it is also known as 'gap strategy'. The template of a reduced relative clause should look like this:

[The glass [ \_ $\emptyset$ \_<sub>Subj of RC</sub> I broke] was very expensive]].

# Reduced Relative Clause or Participial Relative Clause

Lets see some more examples:

[\* $\emptyset_i$  kitāb paṛh- ā huā] laṛkā<sub>i</sub>  
book read- perf pple boy  
Literally: 'The book read boy.'

But, we can say the following:

[ $\emptyset_i$  kone mẽ baiṭh- ī huī] pyārī baccī<sub>i</sub>  
corner in sit- perf pple cute girl  
'The cute girl sitting in the corner.'

In Bangla, we can say this:

[ram- er  $\emptyset_i$  pṛ- a] boī<sub>i</sub>  
Ram- gen read- perf book  
'The book that Ram read. . . '

In Hindi, we can also say:

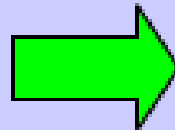
[salmā- kī/ \*ne  $\emptyset_i$  likh- ī huī] kitāb<sub>i</sub>  
Salma- gen erg write- perf pple book  
'The book written by Salma . . . ' ('The book that Salma wrote . . . ')

# PARTICIPLE CLAUSES

We can make participle clauses with –ing participles and –ed participles.

3) Use –ing participle clauses to replace relative clauses with active verbs.

People **who live with pets**  
are more friendly and have  
less stress.

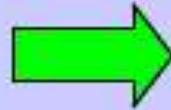


People **living with pets**  
are more friendly and  
have less stress.



2) Use –ed participle clauses to replace relative clauses with passive verbs.

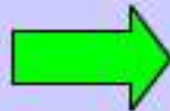
I always buy clothes **that have been made** of natural fibres.



I always buy clothes **made** of natural fibres.



Their first song, **which was called** 'My Girl', became an instant hit.

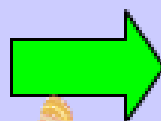


Their first song, **called** 'My Girl', became an instant hit.



3) In formal writing present and past participles can be used to replace clauses, taking the first position in the sentence for emphasis.

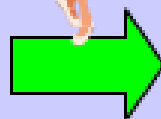
Monica, **who was dressed** entirely in red, entered the room dancing.



**Dressed** entirely in red, Monica entered the room dancing.



She is so rich **that** she can afford buying pricey jewellery.



**Being** so rich, she can afford buying pricey jewellery.

