

Relative Clauses and Noun-Modifying Clauses in Chantyal

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1. INTRODUCTION

Translation equivalents of English relative clauses are accomplished in Chantyal, a Tibeto-Burman language in the Tamangic group spoken in Nepal, with a construction referred to in this handout and in other publications as a *nominalization*.

This term was chosen because of the syncretism in Chantyal between the form used for clausal nominalization in the strict sense [clauses used as arguments of other clauses] and the form used by clauses with adnominal functions.

The usual tests that might be used to distinguish the internal structure of otherwise syncretistic nominals from adnominal clauses are not particularly appropriate for Chantyal because it is a language with a very low *referential density* [Noonan (*ms*)].

Argument arrays in nominalized clauses and adnominal clauses are identical to argument arrays in syntactic main clauses.

2. USES OF NOMINALIZATIONS IN CHANTYAL

Nominalizations in Chantyal are formed with the morpheme **-wa**, a form having cognates in many TB languages [eg Classical Tibetan **-pa**, Gurung **-ba**, etc.]. Words containing this form can be used to express a wide variety of functions:

- (1) 1. nominalization in the strict sense
2. verb complementation
3. noun complementation
4. purpose clause
5. relative clause
6. non-relative attributive
7. agent and patient nominal
8. attributive nominal
9. expression of the semantic predicate in verbal periphrasis
10. main verb

2.1 *Nominalization:*

Forms in **-wa** are used as citation forms for verbs. They are also used in discourse as names of activities or states. These forms are nouns and may be case-marked.

- (2) **h̥ya-wa aŋgreji b̥hasa-ri khawa b̥hi-m-ě**
go-NOM English language-LOC how say-NPAST-Q
'How do you say "to go" in English?'

- (3) **p̥əri-wa g̃āra-wa mu**
study-NOM good-NOM be.NPAST
'Studying is good'

- (4) **capa ca-wa-ye ligam**
meal eat-NOM-GEN back
'after eating'¹

- (5) **m̥ərə-w̃a-sə b̥hi-wa thasa-wa fin nu**
other-PL-ERG say-NOM hear-NOM be.NPST REMINDER
'What we hear is what other people say.' [Z146]

¹ Notice that the word **capa** 'meal' is a fossilized nominalization of the root **ca-** 'eat'.

2.2 Verb complements:

Forms in **-wa** are used as verb complements. The anterior suffix **-si** is available for indicating a secondary [relative] past tense in any sort of nominalized clause.

- (6) **nfi-sə reysi thū-wa a-kham mu**
we-ERG liquor drink-NOM NEG-be.able be.NPAST
'We aren't able to drink liquor'
- (7) **nfi-i them-əŋ pali-ri mi phur-si-wa puttə**
we-GEN house-LOC veranda-LOC fire blow-ANT-NOM smoke.rising
dhwāl wurə-wa mǎra-i
smoke fly-NOM see-PERF
'We saw a fire set and smoke rising on the veranda of our house' [O12]

2.3 Noun complements:

Forms in **-wa** may also act as noun complements.

- (8) **na-ra reysi thū-wa mən kha-i**
I-DAT liquor drink-NOM desire come-PERF
'I want to drink liquor' [*lit* a desire to drink liquor came to me]
- (9) **na-sə reysi thū-wa thaa yǎ-i**
I-ERG liquor drink-NOM knowledge find-PERF
'I recall drinking liquor' [*lit* I found knowledge that I drank liquor]

2.4 Purpose clauses:

A nominalization with **-wa**, with the addition of the locative case suffix, is used to code purpose clauses:

- (10) **khi ca-wa-ri kha-i**
he eat-NOM-LOC come-PERF
'He came to eat'
- (11) **səŋlal-ma mǎə tara-wa-ri hya-i**
Sanglal-PL honey gather-NOM-LOC go-PERF
'Sanglal and some others went to gather honey'

2.5 Adnominal clauses:

Adnominal clauses are formed with **-wa**. The anterior suffix **-si** is a secondary [relative] past tense marker available in adnominal clauses:

- (12) **[gay-ye sya ca-wa] mənchi**
cow-GEN meat eat-NOM person
'the person who is eating beef'
- (13) **[gay-ye sya ca-si-wa] mənchi**
cow-GEN meat eat-ANT-NOM person
'the person who ate beef'

These **-wa** adnominal clauses can be used to relativize on any core argument, whether animate or inanimate, and on obliques. [See also §3 below.]

- (14) **[bə-thyawa phale mu-wa] mənchi-ra cyǎji jutta kam a-lagi-m**
very-big foot be-NOM person-DAT small shoe work NEG-follow-NPAST
'A small shoe won't work for someone with big feet'
- (15) **[cə bura-sə pəyle bhuluŋ-ra khor chū-si-wa] khyala-ri kha-si-rə**
that old.man-ERG first leopard-DAT trap set-ANT-NOM place-LOC bring-ANT-SEQ
'he brought them back to the place where the old man first set the trap for the leopard' [P338]

- (16) [əni kfi pəyle india-ri fya-wa] byala-mar gfiyaŋ khaw mu-wā
 then you first India-LOC go-NOM time-CIRC forest how be-IMPF
 ‘Then, around the time you first went to India, how was the forest?’ [U81]
- (17) [cə si-si-wa] [bfuluŋ-sə ca-si-wa] gay-ra māya la-i
 that die-ANT-NOM leopard-ERG eat-ANT-NOM COW-DAT love do-PERF
 ‘He loved that dead cow that the leopard ate.’ [P34]

The last example shows that multiple nominalizations can modify the same noun.

All but one attested native word translating an English adjective contains the suffix **-wa** or a [presumably] fossilized earlier form of the suffix:

- (18) **gāra-wa** ‘good’
thya-wa ‘big’
lim-pa ‘sweet, tasty’

Such forms were thus once analyzable as stative verbs in a relative construction. However, the recent massive influx of Nepali vocabulary – including most of the Chantyal stock of adjectives – has weakened [or perhaps even destroyed] this analysis:

- (19) **thya-wa kalce naku**
 big-NOM black dog
 ‘big, black dog’

2.6 *Non-relative attributive:*

There is an additional, related set of uses for the suffix **-wa**, which I will refer to loosely as the ‘non-relative attributive’. In this use, **-wa** may be suffixed onto adverbs, relative words, locative nouns, and case-marked nouns when they are used as modifiers of nouns:

- (20) **təyla-wa saka**
 yesterday-NOM ancestor
 ‘yesterday’s ancestors’ [V101]
- (21) **ligə-wa samra-ye phəlce**
 back-NOM thigh-GEN muscle
 ‘back thigh muscle’ [I24]
- (22) **yəwta dyammər-ma citro-ma-ye fīə-sərə-wa phəlphul-ma-ye rəksi**
 one dogwood-PL barberry-PL-GEN that-manner-NOM fruit-PL-GEN liquor
 ‘liquor from some fruits like dogwood and barberry’ [Q329]
- (23) **chə məyna-ri-wa nani**
 six month-LOC-NOM baby
 ‘six-month old child’
- (24) **məŋgəle-ri-wa mənchi-ma**
 Mangale-LOC-NOM person-PL
 ‘people from Mangale’
- (25) **syālkħərkə-ōra-wa mənchi**
 Syalkharka-CIRC-NOM person
 ‘person from around Syalkharka’
- (26) **gāw-muwa-ri-wa kyeles**
 village-PROX-LOC-NOM field
 ‘a field near the village’
- (27) **nfiə-ri-gəm-wa sya**
 inside-LOC-ABL-NOM meat
 ‘innards’

(28) **kɸwara-ru-wa kəru**
 wheat-COM-NOM hooded.barley
 'the hooded barley among the wheat'

(29) **ram-siŋ-wa photo**
 Ram-COM-NOM photo
 'Ram's photo' [*ie* a photo Ram owns]

This last example can be contrasted with a similar construction involving the genitive:

(30) **ram-ye photo**
 Ram-GEN photo
 'Ram's photo' [*ie* a photo Ram owns *or* a photo taken of Ram]

Where the two contrast, the genitive indicates a more intimate relationship than is signaled by an attributive with **-wa**. It should be noted that an NP juxtaposed before another NP can function as an attributive as well:

(31) **pyā mɸinθo**
 flute flower
 'flute flower'

(32) **phuli kūro**
 nose.stud burr
 'Bidens biternata'

(33) **chimkhola iskul**
 Chimkhola school
 'the Chimkhola school'

2.7 Agent and patient nominals:

Forms in **-wa** can also be used as agent nominals. So, a form like

(34) **ca-wa**
 eat-NOM
 'eating' or 'eater'

can be interpreted as either a simple nominalization ['eating'] or as an agent nominal ['eater']. Such forms can fill any sort of nominal slot:

(35) **na-sə capa ca-wa-ra kwi pin-ji**
 I-ERG meal eat-NOM-DAT water give-PERF
 'I gave water to the one who was eating'

(36) **na-sə reysi thū-wa-ye naku khway-kəy mu**
 I-ERG liquor drink-NOM-GEN dog feed-PROG be.NPAST
 'I'm feeding the liquor-drinker's dog'

(37) **reysi thū-si-wa-ma-sə goth khāra-i**
 liquor drink-ANT-NOM-PL-ERG cowshed burn-PERF
 'Those who had been drinking liquor burned down the cowshed'

Notice that the anterior suffix **-si** can occur with these nominals.

Interestingly, these nominals may be interpreted either as agent nominals or as patient nominals, *ie* either as referring to the agent or to the patient. The three examples above receive an agent nominal interpretation. The example below receives a patient nominal interpretation:

(38) **cə ləra pari-wa-ma gətilo ləra a-ta-si-n tə**
 that strip make.happen-NOM-PL good strip NEG-become-ANT-SUP FACT
 'those strips, the ones that I made, might not have become good strips' [I110]

2.8 *Attributive nominals:*

Nominals can be formed from structures analogous to relative clauses, as we have seen, and also from non-relative attributives.

- (39) **na-sə məŋgəle-ri-wa-ma-ra kwi pin-ji**
 I-ERG Mangale-LOC-NOM-PL-DAT water give-PERF
 'I gave water to the people from Mangale'

Suffixation of **-wa** is recursive, the limitations being those of sense and processability. The first example below shows a non-relative attributive formed from a case-marked attributive nominal:

- (40) **məŋgəle-ri-wa-ma-siŋ-wa photo**
 Mangale-LOC-NOM-PL-COM-NOM photo
 'the photo belonging to the people from Mangale'

The next example shows that this form, too, may fill a nominal slot. In other words, an attributive nominal can be built off of another attributive nominal:

- (41) **na-sə məŋgəle-ri-wa-ma-siŋ-wa-ra dekhə-i**
 I-ERG Mangale-LOC-NOM-PL-CIRC-NOM-DAT show-PERF
 'I showed it to the owners from Mangale'

2.9 *Expression of the semantic predicate in periphrastic verb complexes:*

Chantyal has been under strong Nepali influence for a considerable period and has developed considerable inventories of periphrastic constructions, a far greater number than its Tamangic kin, which typically have developed very few. The attested combinations involving the nominalizer **-wa** are found in (42):

| (42) | SEMANTIC | AUX | SENSE |
|------|-----------|----------------|--|
| | MAIN VERB | | |
| | V-wa | ɦin | Pres intentional, habitual |
| | V-si-wa | ɦin | Pres perf, past: 'it turns out that'; resultant states |
| | V-wa | ɦin-si-m | Past [discovery of fact; modal sense (?)] |
| | V-si-wa | ɦin-si-m | Past perf [simply records event: 'it turned out that'] |
| | V-wa | ɦin-si-n | Pres perf suppositional |
| | V-si-wa | ɦin-si-n | Past perf suppositional |
| | V-wa | ɦin-la-nə | Pres intentional conditional |
| | V-si-wa | ɦin-la-nə | Past intentional conditional |
| | V-wa | mu | Pres prospective [prediction] |
| | V-si-wa | mu | Pres perf resultative |
| | V-wa | mu-ma | Past prospective [prediction] |
| | V-si-wa | mu-ma | Past perf resultative |
| | V-wa | mu-wa ɦin-si-m | Pres perf resultative [hidden beforehand] |
| | V-si-wa | mu-wa ɦin-si-m | Past perf resultative [hidden beforehand] |
| | V-gəy | mu-wa ɦin-si-m | Pres perf resultative progressive |
| | V-wa | ta-wa ɦin | Pres hypothetical prospective ['would come to'] |
| | V-wa | ta-wa ɦin-si-m | Pres perf hypothetical prospective |
| | V-si | ni-si-wa ɦin | Catalytic passive [accidental] |
| | V-si | yā-si-wa ɦin | Catalytic passive [deliberate, deserved] |
| | V-wa | ta-T/A/M | Pres predictive ['come to': definite result] |
| | V-wa-khum | ta-T/A/M | Reciprocal |
| | V-wa | la-i | Inceptive |

legend:

-wa nominalizer -m non-past ɦin identity copula

| | | | | | |
|-------|-----------------------------|-----|---------------|----|-------------------------------|
| -si | anterior/sequential converb | -n | suppositional | mu | locational/attributive copula |
| -gəy | simultaneous converb | -nə | result | ta | 'become' |
| -khum | reciprocal | -la | conditional | la | 'do' |
| -ma | past impferective | | | yā | 'find' |
| -(j)i | perfective | | | ni | 'happen' |

2.10 Main verb:

The suffix **-wa** may also mark the syntactically main verb within the verb complex, as in:

- (43) **ci-wa də**
sit-NOM fact
'I'll stay!' [U202]
- (44) **aay, kattay talay tha-i nə a-tha-wa tane**
gosh definitely cut-ANT FOCUS NEG-cut-NOM AFFIRMATION
'Gosh, it didn't even cut, right?' [I56]
- (45) **bħalu nə puli-puli la-wa ro**
bear FOCUS wiggle-wiggle do-NOM HEARSAY
'Bear wiggled!' [L21]
- (46) **bənnu-ye nal tato ta-si-wa**
gun-GEN barrel hot become-ANT-NOM
'The barrel of the gun had become hot!' [R29]

In Chantyal, when nominalizations appear as main clauses, the effect is one of mirativity, *i.e.* the sense that the predication so expressed is in some sense surprising, contrary to expectation, or in some way exasperating. Noonan (2008b) provides some discussion and references to the situation in other Bodic languages.

3. FURTHER COMMENTS ON NOMINALIZATIONS IN CHANTYAL

The Sentences below are translations of the sentences sent to us by Yoshiko and Bernard on Feb. 5.

A.

1. **[[kitab kin-si-wa] bidyarthi] su nħe**
book buy-ANT-NOM student who be.Q.NPAST
'Who is [the student [(who) bought a book]]?'
- 2a. **[bidyarthi-sə kitab kin-ji] bħi-wa (kuro) thaa ta-i**
student-ERG book buy-PERF say-NOM thing knowledge become-PERF
'[The fact [(that) (student) bought a book]] was revealed.'
- 2b. **[bidyarthi-sə kitab kin-si-wa] (kuro) thaa ta-i**
student-ERG book buy-ANT-NOM thing knowledge become-PERF
'[The fact [(that) (student) bought a book]] was revealed.'
3. **[bidyarthi-sə kitab kin-si-wa] khusəra khəni nħe**
student-ERG book buy-ANT-NOM change where be.Q.NPAST
'Where is [[the change](from) (student's) buying a book]?'

The A sentences the discussion above, namely that Chantyal uses the same construction for nominalizations and adnominal clauses.

B.

1. **[(na-sə) cə thəpi thəpi-si-rə sup ca-wa] kħyala səmjħi-i**
I-ERG that repeat repeat-ANT-SEQ soup eat-NOM place remember-PERF
'(I) was remembering [the store [(at which) (we) could have seconds of soup]]...'

2. [fɪə-jə tam-sə bɦəsəkkəy bərsə səmmə khi-ye lokne-ru ci-si-wa]
 that-that speech-INST a.lot year until s/he-GEN husband-COM live-ANT-COM
dukho səmjhə-i
 hardship remind-PERF
- 2a. [fɪə-jə tam-sə bɦəsəkkəy bərsə səmmə khi-ye lokne-ru yā-si-wa]
 that-that speech-INST a.lot year until s/he-GEN husband-COM find-ANT-COM
dukho səmjhə-i
 hardship remind-PERF
 '(it) reminds (one) of the hardships of [the long years [(during which) (she) walked
 (=lived together) with (her husband)]]'
3. [(kɦi-sə) cə capa ca-si-wa] dɦer tɦokɦor nep-la
 you-ERG that food eat-ANT-NOM plate by.now wash-PERF.Q
 'Have (you) already washed [the bowl [(from/with which) (you) ate]]?'
4. [(mənchi-ra) batha ta-wa] kitab
 person-DAT intelligence become-NOM book
- 4a. [(mənchi-ra) batha bənə-wa] kitab
 person-DAT intelligence make-NOM book
 '[the book [(by reading which) (X's) head gets better]]'
5. [wojən a-bərə-wa] mithay ta-wa-si-n ki a-ta-wa-si-n
 weight NEG-increase-NOM candy become-NOM-PERF-SUP OR NEG-become-NOM-PERF-SUP
 'I wonder if there aren't any [sweets [(even though (X) eats which) (X) doesn't gain weight]].'
6. [kɦi-sə cə kəmə-ysi-rə] [domase ta-si-wa] pəysa jəmməy ca-i cɦin-ji
 you-ERG that earn-ANT-SEQ interpreter become-ANT-NOM money all eat-ANT finish-PERF
- 6a. [kɦi-sə cə domase ta-si-rə] [kəmə-ysi-wa] pəysa jəmməy ca-i cɦin-ji
 you-ERG that interpreter become-ANT-SEQ earn-ANT-NOM money all eat-ANT finish-PERF
 'Have you eaten all [the money (which you earned by) (your) having translated (X) ?'
7. [cə mənchi-sə siyo tɦupə-wa] ya pəni yekchin thəpəkkə ɦa-tɦana-m
 that person-ERG needle sew-NOM hand even one.moment stand.still NEG-keep-PRES
 '(She) does not rest even [(her) hand [(with which she) is sewing]].'

The B sentences [not always identical in meaning to the Japanese originals!] reveal that the range of semantic relations between the nominalized clause and its head is similar to that illustrated for Japanese. Where there is an (a) sentence, it is an idiomatic first translation.

C.

1. [jətti pəlti sɦyala-i kara-wa kɦa-wa] syanimaya
 as.much.as time look.at-SEQ cry-NOM come-NOM movie
 'the movie (which) whenever (I) watch (the movie) I cry.'
2. [phayni-si-wa kosili pəthə-si-wa] yəwta pakuna mu-wā
 break-ANT-NOM gift send-ANT-NOM one guest be-IMPF
 'There was a guest who was sent a broken gift'
 '(lit.) There is a [client [(to whom) the summer gift [(which) I sent [was broken]]]], but...'

Sentence (1) was translatable into Chantyal with a structure different from the Japanese original. *Look at*, is rendered by a sequential converb. My Chantyal friend, Ram Prasad Bhulanja, and I had numerous attempts at rendering (2), but could not find an acceptable rendering with a structure similar to the Japanese original, *i.e.* where *break* was the verbal of a clause taken to modify *client/guest*. [Note that there is no word for *client*, so we substituted *guest*.] An attempt at a literal rendering of the Japanese original in Chantyal would be:

- 2a. **pəthə-si-wa kosili phayni-si-wa yəwta pakuna mu-wă**
 send-ANT-NOM gift break-ANT-NOM one guest be-IMPF
 ‘There was a guest who was sent a broken gift’

We tried this out on some other Chantyal, but they couldn’t contextualize it to produce the intended reading. One rendering in idiomatic Chantyal is seen in (2b), which employs a sequential converb and a main verb expressed as a nominalization, having a mirative sense.

- 2b. **pakuna-ra nə pəthə-ysi-rə kosili phayni-si-wa la**
 guest-DAT FOCUS send-ANT-SEQ gift break-ANT-NOM INCREDULITY
 ‘Having sent the gift to the guest, it was (found to be) broken!’

It seems that (1) is possible in Chantyal because one can make a pragmatic inference that a movie would be the cause of tears, whereas (2a) fails because *guest* [or any human referent] is linked too easily with *break* in any of a number of idiomatic senses. Extractions that would violate Ross’s Complex NP Constraint seem possible in Chantyal with sufficient context [*i.e.* people will accept them], for example the following:

3. **[[mastər-ra khñyala-si-wa] kyata-ra ləgari-si-wa] hə-cu yipa mu**
 teacher-DAT throw-ANT-NOM boy-DAT chase-ANT-NOM that-this stone be.NPAST
 ‘This [aforementioned one] is the stone that (I) chased the boy who threw __ at the teacher’

Spontaneous productions of this sort are very rare and unattested in my transcribed corpus.

4. SOME COMMENTS ON THE HISTORY OF CHANTYAL NOMINALIZATIONS

DeLancey (2005) proposes that Bodic nominalizations used adnominally were originally constructed with the genitive. This matter is discussed in Noonan (2008d), where it is concluded that the evidence is mixed, but on the whole probably supports DeLancey’s hypothesis. Chantyal no longer uses the genitive in this way. Below are examples from the Tamangic language Gurung:

- (1) **[cá pxra-bá-e] mxi jaga** ADNOMINAL CLAUSE
 that walk-NOM-GEN person PL
 ‘those walking people’ (=sentries)
- (2) **[bana·-r-bá-e] sī** NON-RELATIVE ATTRIBUTIVE
 forest-LOC-NOM-GEN wood
 ‘trees from the forest’

Abbreviations

| | | | | | |
|------|---------------|-------|-------------|-------|--------------------|
| ABL | ablative | GEN | genitive | PRES | present |
| ADES | adessive | IMPF | imperfect | PROG | progressive |
| ANT | anterior | LOC | locative | PROX | proximative |
| CIRC | circumulative | NEG | negative | Q | question |
| COM | comitative | NOM | nominalizer | SEQ | sequential converb |
| DAT | dative | NPAST | non-past | SUP | suppositional |
| DET | determinate | PERF | perfective | SUPER | superessive |
| ERG | ergative | PL | plural | | |

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Appendix 1: Possible Genetic Relationships Within the Bodic Section of Tibeto-Burman

