Between correlatives, internally headed clauses and cleft: relative clauses in Mano
oral/poster
(possibly) theme session 1: Generalized Noun Modifying Clause Constructions

In this paper I will discuss specific typological properties of relative clauses in Mano, Southeastern Mande. First, relative clauses in Mano belong to the rare typological type discussed in [Nikitina 2012], that is, "a non-reduction relative clause appearing before a pronominal head, inside the main clause". Such a type "is denied, either implicitly or explicitly, in theoretical work on non-reduction relativization and, more specifically, on constructions with correlative clauses" [ibid.].

mī	nɔ́fé	lɛ́	ì		nàà	à		ká	kō		bà
person	any	REL	2SG.DIPFV		love:IPFV	3SG.NSBJ		with	1PL.NSBJ		in

ā	à		sí!
TOP	3SG.NSBJ		pick

'Take any of us whom you like!'

As typical for other Mande languages, relative clauses may as well be used in the topicalized sentence-initial position.

Mɛ́ī	là		lɔ́ɔ́	lɛ́	à		dɔ̄	ɔ̄	lɛ̄
Mei	3SG.POSS		trade	REL	3SG.DIPFV>3SG		stop:IPFV	TOP	3SG.EXI

dà	là	lɔ̀ɔ̀		ká.
fall	on	trade:IZF		with

'Mey's trade that he implements is exploitative'.

Hovewer, there are several features that distinguish Mano relative clauses from those in other Southeastern Mande.

   1. Morphology
As in Kla-Dan and Dan-Gweetaa, such clauses are marked by a post-nominal relativizer and an optional clause-final marker related to a topic marker [Vydrin 2008]. Only in Mano, at least in the Kpeinson dialect, the relative marker grammaticalizes into a floating high tone which is added to a preceding word.

gbą́	gbùò	lɛ́	mā		gɛ̀...	-> gbą́ gbùó
dog	big	REL	1SG.PRET>3SG		see	

'The big dog that I saw...'
   2. Syntax
   2.1. Resumptive pronoun
The resumptive pronoun in the main clause which immediately follows the relative clause is optional; in the following example relative clauses approach to the internally-headed relativization strategy which, being less autonomous, may be the initial point of the grammaticalization.

lɛ̄	sè	í		ī	sèkɛ̄ɛ̀	ɓō		gbū̠	mɔ̀	lɛ́
3SG.EXI	good	2SG.CONJ		2SG.NSBJ	gratitude	take.off		gather	on	REL

è		lō	à		nɔ̄-ɔ̀	ī		lɛ̀ɛ̄	ŋwɛ́ì.
3SG.DIPFV		go:IPFV	3SG.NSBJ		give-GER	2SG.NSBJ		for	behind

'You should thank your brother for the help he will bring'.

2.2. Combinability

Like in Dan, as opposed to other Southwestern Mande languages, there are no syntactic restrictions on the position of the relative clause: they are attested not only in front of postpositional phrases (like in Wan and Kla-Dan), but also in front of verb phrases (like in Tura and Dan-Gweetaa), which shows a higher degree of grammaticalization.

2.3. Cleft

The cleft contruction is formed exactly the same way as relative clause. It may be interpreted as a relative clause acquiring autonomy in the sentence-initial position.

À	*légbú*	*lɛ́*	*mā*	*sɔ̀lɔ̀ɓō*	*ā.*
3SG.NSBJ	rest	REL	1SG.PRET>3SG	get	TOP

'What I got was only the remains'.

2.4. Appositive function

Relative clauses can also be used postpositively, in an appositive function, which is also the case of the further development of the autonomy of the relative clause.

Ŋ́Ŋ̄	*nàà*	*í*	*ɓū*	*kpàà*	*lɛ́*	*wèŋ̀*	*dò*
1SG.IPFV	love:IPFV	2SG.CONJ	rice	cook	REL	salt	INDEF

wáá	*mɔ̀*	*ɔ̄.*
NEG.COP>3SG	on	TOP

'I want you to cook the rice without salt (so that there is no salt)'.

We can conclude that relative clause in Mano shares typological properties of rare relativization strategies of Southwest Mande, that is, the clause-internal correlative. In addition to that, it has several peculiar usages covering a large segment of the grammaticalization path.

Some abbreviations

DIPFV - dependent imperfective, GER - gerund, INDEF - indefinite article, IPFV - imperfective, IZF - izafet, NSBJ - non-subjective, POSS - possessive, PRET - preterit, REL - relativizer, TOP - topicalizer.

References

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