

Relative Clauses in K'cho

The most basic type of relative clause in K'cho is illustrated in (2) and (3), which presuppose a transitive sentence like (1).

- (1) Om noh Yong am paapai pe ci.
Om P Yong to flower give NF
Om gave Yong flowers.
- (2) [Yong am paapai pe ci ah] k'chaang
Yong to flower give NF C man
the man [that gave Yong flowers]
- (3) [Om noh Yong am a peit ah] paapai
Om P Yong to 3S give C flower
the flowers [that Om gave Yong]

K'cho relative clauses are marked by *ah*, the general subordinating particle. If the argument which serves as the locus of relativization is the subject, as in (2), the clause verb (*pe*) appears in the same form as in the independent sentence (1). But if the relativized argument is not the subject, as in (3), the clause verb appears in a different form (*peit*). This phenomenon is generally called 'verb stem alternation', and is a characteristic of Kuki-Chin languages. Here *pe* is the stem I form, and *peit* the stem II form. In K'cho, in addition to the morphological change in the stem itself, a stem I verb form requires a tense particle (*ci*) and allows no subject third person agreement, while a stem II verb does not allow *ci*, but requires a subject third person agreement particle (*a*).

Relativization in K'cho is not limited to verbal arguments as in (2) or (3). Genitive noun phrases as illustrated in (4) and (6) may also be relativized, as in (5) and (7).

- (4) Ka teihpŸi noh Yong am paapai pe ci.
1S friend P Yong to flower give NF
My friend gave Yong flowers.
- (5) [a teihpŸi noh Yong am paapai pe ci ah] k'chaang
3S friend P Yong to flower give NF C man
the man [whose friend gave Yong flowers]
- (6) Om noh Yong am ka paapai pe ci.
Om P Yong to 1S flower give NF
Om gave Yong my flowers.
- (7) [Om noh Yong am a paapai a peit ah] k'hngumi
Om P Yong to 3S flower 3S give C woman
the woman [whose flowers Om gave Yong]

In (5), a genitive on the subject is relativized, and the clause verb appears in its stem I form, just as in (2) where it is the subject which is relativized. In (7), it is a genitive on the direct object which is relativized, and stem II of the clause verb is used, just as in (3). Notice that the genitive agreement particle (here third person singular *a*) indicates where the relativized noun phrase is located. But just as in the previous examples, the relativized noun phrase itself is empty, and *a* is not to be taken as a 'resumptive' pronoun.

The paper will explore and attempt to account for these and other properties of K'cho relative clauses.