Relative clauses in Wetan

Kathie Carpenter
University of Oregon

The goals of this paper are twofold; first, to demonstrate how the formally-defined category "relative clause"[1] appears to have little or no meaning in Wetan (although of course Wetan has ways to express all of the functions typically expressed by relative clauses in a language such as English) and, second, to present a heretofore unreported usage of reduplication as a fully grammaticalized subordinating device.

Wetan is an Austronesian language spoken in the far Southeast region of Maluku, a province of Eastern Indonesia. Like most Austronesian languages, Wetan makes extensive use of reduplication. Reported uses (de Josselin de Jong 1987) include the expression of iterativity, plurality, emphasis, durativeness and, interestingly, subordination.

Subordination by reduplication

Wetan's most intriguing use of reduplication is to signal subordinated clausal modification, as seen in the two examples below. In these and subsequent examples, the portion of the sentence analyzed as a relative clause is enclosed in brackets, and portions of interest, in these examples the reduplicated portion of the verb, are in boldface.

1 omo-prir-pi mo-w-lar-pi m-lia
2.Sg.-rise-Prt 2.Sg.-Vol-flee-Prt. 2.Sg-go

m-tutlie tutti lilli ma ao-mtatna
2.Sg-reach-Prep cape corner Conj 1.Sg-sit

le [ajewta oma-**ma**-mati-nana-le dine] tut-ni
Prep [driftwood 2.Sg-**Dup**-die-Prf-Prep Dem] top-Poss

"You must rise and go to the end of the cape and I remain sitting on top of [this log of driftwood where you have died]" (14.Updaola.34)[2]

2 R-wenen-nana pipi rene pe normede
3.Pl-kill-Prf goat Dem Prt thereupon

r-kaa	dudillirma	ra-ni	rur-ni
3.Pl-take	horn-Poss-Pl-Conj	chin-Poss	bone-Poss

pe	r-la-r-tuie-le	[Aikierna	n-**de**-dena
Prt	3.Pl-go-3.Pl-Prep	[Aikierna	2.Sg-**Dup**-stay

lien	dene]
cave	Dem]

"After killing those goats they took their horns and jawbones and laid them down in [the cave where Aikierna resided]" (2.Aikierna.16)

In sentences 1 and 2, the first consonant-vowel sequences of the subordinated verbs *mati* "die" and *dena* "stay" have been reduplicated and appear between the person/number prefixes and the full verb form.[3] In these sentences, the head nouns are locatives in the matrix sentence, referring to places whose identity is specified by entire clauses - "the driftwood where you died" and "the cave where Aikierna stayed" respectively. Interestingly, although there has been much acknowledgment that relativization on subjects is easier, more discourse-motivated or more frequent (Keenan and Comrie 1979, Fox 1987, Givon 1990) the majority of relative clauses in these texts had locative head nouns. Although of course mere frequency is neither a counterexample nor even particularly problematic, it is still deserving of explanation. In this case, the explanation is cultural - the crucial function of narratives and folktales throughout Maluku is to provide histories of places, in part as a way to legitimate claims to places.

Relativization of non-locative head nouns, while less frequent, were also well-represented in the texts, as shown in the following example, which shows two relativizations of a head noun *tnjeti-liai* "share" which functions as the direct object in the matrix sentence:

3	Pe	nimde	Romaljewan	ma	Kolilupni	ria
	Prt	then	Rumahlewang	Conj	Kolelupun	person

lira-jati	pele	ra-poli	Iltjuwni-Worawera	pode
feast	Fut.Cond	3.Pl-call	Jaltubun-Worawa	so.that

r-al' wali [tnjeti-liai r-**ana**-ana-n' le uli-uli]
3.Pl-give again [share 3.Pl-**Dup**-eat prep first-first]

[Iltjuwni-Worawera r-a-r-ala-nana-le-ira]
[Jaltubun-Worawa 3.Pl-Dup-3.Pl-Prf-Prep-Pl]

"So when Rumahlewang and Kolelupun made a feast they would invite Jaltubun-Worawa and return [the share of food which they had eaten formerly] [that had been given to them by Jaltubun-Worawa]" (56.Ruri and Narei.28)

Sentence 4 shows reduplication of the verb *lir* "to cleave" to signal its status as a subordinated clausal modifier of the head noun *ora* "bamboo" which is also the direct object in the matrix clause:

4 Noremde r-kaa [ora r-**li**-lir-nan-dene]
thereupon 3.Pl-take [bamboo 3.Pl-**Dup**-cleave-Dem]

pe r-la-r-tuje le liene ida ma
Prt 3.Pl-go-3.Pl-put Prep cave one Conj

toll-er-ene-mde patrene nodierpe
leaf.rib-Pl-Dem-then woman-Dem 3.Sg-carry-Prt

n-la-n-tujer-le luwia-ni keper-ni
3.Sg-go-3.Sg-put-Prep clothes.chest-Poss deep-Poss

"After that they took [the bamboo that had been cleft] and put it in a cave and the woman took the leaf ribs along and put them on the bottom of her clothes chest" (12.Women.17)

The next example shows relativization on a head noun that functions as an indirect object, again achieved by reduplication of the subordinated verb, in this case *kota* "say":

5 Taamma [**na**-na-kot-nan-le] rie
then [**Dup**-3.Sg-say-Prf-Prep] person

idde nanni Maimuti
one name Maimuti

"And the name of [the man to whom he had spoken] was Maimuti"

Use of reduplication as a subordinating device has not before been reported, and thus it is appropriate to consider whether these are truly best analyzed as relative clauses or whether alternative analyses are more insightful. Are these really just simple attributives or nominalizations, for instance, rather than subordinated clausal modifiers? Following are several lines of reasoning that all, I believe, support my contention that these are best analyzed as relative clauses.

The first piece of evidence is the fact that the head noun is often present along with the reduplicated phrase, although headless relatives are also possible. In the next example, the head noun *iwi* "fowl" is accompanied by two conjoined relative clauses.

6 [Iwi **mak**-dena[4] joore rene
[fowl **mak**-stay pole Dem

woite-r-emde radiena] jennira ma
seven-3.Pl-be.present Dem] place-Pl Conj

[**ra**-r-akar-nan-le
[**Dup**-3.Pl-distribute-Prf-Prep

ot-ni-mat-ni-ren-emde
head-Poss-eye-PossPl-Dem-be.present

mak-opaklake rene] ra-woka-r-pe
mak-perform.rites Dem] 3.Pl-collect-Pl.Obj-Prt

r-alle r-temen-la [jaanaj-emni
3.Pl-from 3.Pl-put.away-Prep [provisions

ro-r-odi rene]
Dup-3.Pl-bring Dem]

"[(The body parts of) the hen which were on the seven pointed sticks] were left there and [those which had been distributed among the chiefs] were collected by those acting as priests and put with [the provisions that had been brought.]" (15.Koe.24)

Headless relative clauses do not occur with locative head nouns - instead, if a location such as "the cave" or "the