PRONOUN RETENTION IN KHMER
AND THAI RELATIVE CLAUSES[1]

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Abstract
The construction to be investigated here is the 'Relative Clause' in Khmer (Cambodian) and Thai. This study aims to consider only one aspect or one characteristic of relative clauses in both languages, namely, pronoun retention. The occurrence of resumptive pronouns, pronouns which are coreferential with head noun phrases, in relative clauses will be investigated and some of the constraints on their occurrence in the two languages will be discussed.

1.   Pronoun Retention

According to Comrie (1981), pronoun retention is typologically a way to encode the role of the head noun in the embedded sentence (relative clause). The head noun remains explicitly in the embedded sentence in pronominal form. Pronoun retention is one strategy used to form relative clauses in many languages. An example of pronoun retention in non-standard English is *this is the road that I know where it leads*. In this example, the relative clause is *that I know where it leads* functions to modify the head noun phrase *the road* in the main clause. The resumptive pronoun *it* in the relative clause refers to the head noun *road* and it remains in the normal position of the clause subject, the grammatical relation that it encodes.

The following examples illustrate relative clauses formed by pronoun retention in Khmer and Thai.

Khmer
(1) *kɲom   skoal   kruu   m-neak   [dael   **koat**   baŋrien   phiesaa   ʔaŋkleih]*
     I   know   teacher one-person REL   s/he   teach   language English
     'I know a teacher who teaches English.'

The noun phrase being relativized in the above example is *kruu mneak* 'a teacher'. The resumptive pronoun *koat* 's/he' which is coreferential with the noun phrase *kruu mneak* occurs in the normal position of the subject in the relative clause, that is, preceding the main verb *baŋrien* 'teach' (the basic word order in Khmer is S-V-O).

<u>Thai</u>
(2) *chăn   rúucàk   khruu   [thîi   **khǎw**   sɔ̆ɔn   phaasǎa   ʔaŋkrìt]*
    I   know   teacher   REL   s/he   teach   language   English
    'I know a teacher who teaches English.'

The pronoun *khǎw* 's/he' in the relative clause above is coreferential with the head noun *khruu* 'teacher' in the main clause. The grammatical role of that pronoun is subject of the embedded clause and the pronoun occurs in the subject position, that is, precedes the verb *sɔ̆ɔn* 'teach' (the basic word order in Thai is also S-V-O).

With the pronoun retention strategy, it is found that it allows more NPs to be relativized. Some languages like Basque don't normally allow relativization on Genitive NPs. But with this strategy, Genitive NPs are relativizable. (Keenan 1985).

2.   Relative Clauses in Khmer and Thai[2]
2.1   Relative Clauses in Khmer[3]
Relative clauses in Khmer are marked by the word *dael*, the general marker for linking subordinate clauses with head nouns (Comrie & Horie 1995). Typologically, relative clauses in this language are of the postnominal type, that is, relative clauses occur following head NPs, as in (3).

(3) *kʔaek   tɔteahslaaphaə sɑmdav tii moatstɯɯŋ   muəy [dael   riiŋtɯkʔah]*
    crow   fly   toward   river   one   REL   dry
    'The crow flies to a river which is dry.'   [written text]

In (3), the relative clause which modifies the head NP *tii moatstɯɯŋ   muəy* 'a river' is *dael   riiŋtɯkʔah* 'which is dry'. The marker *dael* occurs clause-initially and the relative clause follows the head NP.

Besides the pronoun retention strategy, relative clauses in Khmer can be formed by the gap strategy, the least explicit way of encoding the role of the head NP in embedded clauses. Instead of having a personal pronoun remaining in the relative clause, there is a missing NP which is coreferential with the head noun. In example (3) above, from the basic word order S-V-O and from the argument structure of the main verb in the embedded clause, there is a missing argument in the relative clause *dael riiŋtɯkʔah* 'which is dry', that is, the subject NP of the clause. Since the missing noun phrase in the relative clause formed by the gap strategy is coreferential with the head NP, the missing subject argument in the example (3) can be retrievable as *tii moatstɯɯŋ muəy* 'a river'.

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[2] Although relative clauses in Khmer and Thai allow the omission of the relative clause markers, the present study includes only relative clauses with the overt markers.
Both written and spoken data were collected in the two languages. Examples from written texts are marked as [written text], all other examples are elicited spoken examples. There are around 150 relative clauses collected in each language.
Restrictive and non-restrictive types are not distinguished in the study.
[3] The written data were collected from newspapers, journals, and short stories. The spoken data were elicited from two native Khmer informants in Thailand, one male graduate student and one female graduate student at Chulalongkorn University)

Concerning the NP positions that can be relativized in Khmer, subjects, direct objects, indirect objects and possessors can all be relativized. Subjects and indirect objects can be relativized by using either the gap strategy or pronoun retention. Direct objects are relativized only by the gap strategy whereas possessive NPs can be relativized only by pronoun retention. The examples (4) – (7) will illustrate the relativization of those NP positions.

(4) *tŋay   muǝy   kaɲcrouŋ   babuǝl   cmaa   [dael   Ø   cie   mɯɯt]   tɯɯvleiŋ*
    day   one   fox   invite   cat   REL   be   friend   visit
    srok   kam naǝt   rɔbɑh   kluǝn
    village   birth   belong to   him
    'One day, the fox invites a cat which is his friend to visit his hometown.'
    [written text]

The subject NP *cmaa* 'cat' is relativized and leaves a gap in the subject position of the relative clause .

(5) *koon srǝy   koat   pii neak   mɯn   ceh   tvǝǝ   cam naot [dael   neak*
    daughter   their   two CLF   not   know   do   exercise   REL   person
    kruu   dak ʔaoy   tvǝǝ kaa   Ø   nɯɯv   pteah]
    teacher   assign   work   at   house
    'Their two daughters don't know how to do the exercise which the teacher assigns to be done at home.'   [written text]

The direct object NP *cam naot* 'exercise' is relativized in the above example and leaves a gap in the direct object position, that is, after the verb *tvǝǝ kaa* 'work'.

(6) *kmeeŋ   [dael   kɲom   ʔaoy   luy   Ø]   ʔaayuʔ   pram   cnam*
    child   REL   I   give   money   age   five   year
    'The child to whom I gave some money is five years old.'

The indirect object *kmeeŋ* 'child' is relativized and leaves a gap in the clause-final position of the relative clause *dael   kɲom   ʔaoy   luy*.

(7) *kavʔǝy [dael   cǝǝŋ   **vie**   baan   bak]   cie   kavʔǝy rɔbɑh   koat*
    chair   REL   leg   it   PAST   break   be   chair   of   him
    'The chair the leg of which leg is broken is his chair.'

The possessor *kavʔǝy* 'chair' is relativized. The personal pronoun *vie* 'it' occurs in the relative clause to encode the possessive role of the head noun *kavʔǝy* 'chair'.

2.2   Relative Clauses in Thai[4]

Unlike relative clauses in Khmer, relative clauses in Thai can be introduced by one of the three markers, namely, *thîi*, *sîŋ*, and *ʔan*. The *thîi* marker is the most frequent and neutral choice whereas *sîŋ* is used in more literary and formal style. *thîi* and *sîŋ* are mostly used interchangeably. The *ʔan* marker is quite archaic. It is still used in present day Thai as the least frequent choice.

Relative clauses in Thai are also typologically of the postnominal type and can be formed by the two strategies, the gap strategy and the pronoun retention strategy. Unlike Khmer, subjects, objects (direct and indirect objects), and possessors can be relativized by either the gap strategy or pronoun retention. However, the gap strategy is more frequently used in both written and spoken Thai. The examples (8) – (11) will illustrate the relativization of all possible NPs.

(8) khun   hěn   thîidin [thîi   Ø   tìt   kàp   dâan   tawantòk   khɔ̌ɔŋ   raw] mǎy
     you   see   land   REL   adjoin with   side   west   of   us   Q
     'Do you see the land which is next to our west side?'   [written text]

The subject NP *thîidin* 'land' is relativized. The gap in the subject position, preceding the verb *tìt*, in the embedded clause is coreferential with that NP.

(9) phuakkhǎw   yaŋ   mây   khɨɨn   phɨɨnthîi   bɔɔriween   sǔan   lumphinii [sîŋ   cháy
     they   still   not   return   area   around   garden   Lumpini   REL use
     pen   sǎmnákŋaan   chûakhraaw]
  Ø   be   office   temporary
  'They haven't returned the area around the Lumpini Garden which is used as the temporary office.' [written text]

The direct object *phɨɨnthîi bɔɔriween sǔan   lumphinii* 'the area around the Lumpini Garden' is relativized and then leaves a gap in the direct object position in the relative clause, that is, after the verb *cháy* 'use'.

(10) dèk [thîi   phɔ̂ɔmɛ̂ɛ   hây   ŋən   Ø   ŋâayŋâay]   mâk   thùuk   taamcay
     child REL   parents   give   money   easily   often   PASS   spoil
     'The child to whom the parents easily give money is often spoiled.'

The indirect object *dèk* 'child' is relativized and then leaves the gap after the direct object *ŋən* 'money' in the relative clause.

(11) chǎn   rúucàk   phûuchaay   [thîi   phanrayaa   Ø   pùay]
     I   know   man   REL   wife   sick
     'I know the man whose wife is sick.'

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[4] The written data were collected from the online Thai corpus (newspapers, magazines, short stories, etc.) via the program Thai Concordance Online by the Department of Linguistics, Chulalongkorn University. URL: http//www.arts.chula.ac.th/~ling/ThaiConc
The spoken Thai data used in this study were elicited in the workshop on relative clauses in Thai at Chulalongkorn University, May 2003.

The possessor *phûuchaay* 'man' is relativized and the gap after the possessed NP *phanrayaa* 'wife' is coreferential with that noun.

3.   Pronoun Retention in Khmer
3.1 Pronoun Retention in Simple Sentences
Pronoun retention, likewise the gap strategy, can be said to be the 'primary relativization strategies' in Khmer since they can be used to relativize subject NPs, the most easily accessible NPs (Keenan & Comrie 1977). However, pronoun retention with relativized direct object is unacceptable to native speakers. Like the relativized subjects, relativized indirect objects are found with pronoun retention and the occurrence of the resumptive pronoun is optional. On the other hand, the occurrence of a resumptive pronoun is obligatory for relativized possessive NPs. The examples (12) – (15) will illustrate these findings.

(12) **(subject)**

kɲom	*skoal*	*mɔnuh*	*klah*	*[dael*	**kei**	*tvəə-kaa*	*nɯv*	*tii*	*nuh]*
I	know	human	some	REL	s/he	work	at	place	there

'I know someone who works there.'

(13) **(direct object)**

* *ckae*	*[dael*	*kɲom*	*sralaɲ*	**vie** *]*	*baan*	*slap*	
dog	REL	I	love	it	PAST	die	
ckae	*[dael*	*kɲom*	*sra-laɲ*	Ø *]*	*baan*	*slap*	**(Gap)**
dog	REL	I	love		PAST	die	

'The dog which I love a lot has died.'

(14) **(indirect object)**

kmeeŋ	*[dael*	*kɲom*	*ʔaoy*	*luy*	**vie** *]*	*ʔaayuʔ*	*pram*	*cnam*
child	REL	I	give	money	it	age	five	year

'The child to whom I gave some money is five years old.'

(15) **(possessor)**

boʔrah	*[dael*	*ckae*	*(rɔbah)*	**koat**	*rʋəhbat]*	*mɯn*	*sbaay-cət*
man	REL	dog	of	him	run away	not	happy
* *boʔrah*	*[dael*	*ckae*	*(rɔbah)*	Ø	*rʋəhbat]*	*mɯn*	*sbaay-cət*
man	REL	dog	of		run away	not	happy

'The man whose dog ran away is sad.'

The distribution of pronoun retention in Khmer is particularly interesting from a more general theoretical perspective. According to Keenan and Comrie (1977), if the primary relativization strategy, in this case 'pronoun retention', in a language is possible for a particular position on the Accessibility Hierarchy, then it must also be possible for all positions lower on the Accessibility Hierarchy. In other words, in the pronoun retention case, the higher NPs on the hierarchy imply the lower NPs.

SUBJECT

DIRECT OBJECT

INDIRECT OBJECT

OBLIQUE

GENITIVE

OBJECT OF COMPARISON
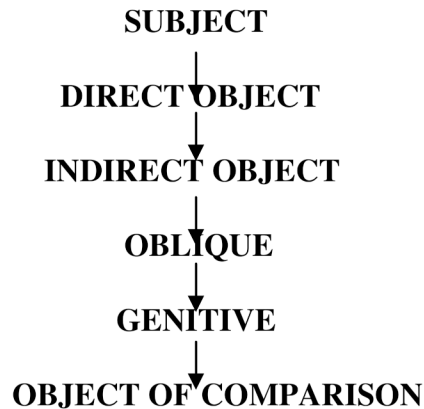
From the Noun Phrase Accessibility Hierarchy proposed by Keenan & Comrie above, Direct Object is lower in position than Subject, Indirect Object is lower than Direct Object and Subject, and so on. The lower NP on the hierarchy is, according to the claim, more accessible, in this case easier to relativize, than the higher NP. So Subject is the most accessible NP, in this case, is the easiest NP to relativize. Direct Object is more accessible than Indirect Object and so on. Oblique, according to the hierarchy, means the major Oblique case NP which expresses an argument of the main predicate, as *the table* in *Janie put the glass on the table*. The Oblique here doesn't mean the one with the adverbial function as *in China* in *Wen Ling studies in China*. Oblique NPs in Khmer and Thai are mostly in adverbial function so Oblique is excluded in the present study.

With respect to pronoun retention in Khmer, the strategy applies to Subject, so it should apply to all other lower NPs, that is, Direct Object, Indirect Object and Genitive. However, pronoun retention in Khmer is a counterexample to this particular claim since pronoun retention doesn't apply with a relativized Direct Object, although this is lower than Subject. Yet, it starts to apply again to Indirect Object and Possessor. In addition, pronoun retention in Khmer also violates the first Hierarchy Constraint which is stated that 'any relative clause forming strategy must apply to a continuous segment of the Accessibility Hierarchy.

According to Keenan (1985), the lower an NP is on the hierarchy, the more common it is to find it expressed by pronouns. That is, Indirect Object is more commonly expressed by a pronoun in a relative clause than Direct Object. Direct Object more commonly encodes the role of the head NP in the relative clause than Subject. Khmer, again, provides a counterexample to this generalization.

Concerning pronoun retention with relativized subjects in Khmer, it is found that not all subjects can be encoded by the resumptive pronouns. Only animate subjects like humans and animals can be relativized with the pronoun retention strategy, as in the examples below. (Note that relativizing a possessor, where pronoun retention is obligatory, does allow, indeed require a resumptive pronoun even with inanimate heads, as in example (7).)

(16) **boʔrɑh** *[dael* **koat** *cuəy kmeeŋ] cie* taa rɔbɑh kɲom
man REL he help child be grandfather of I
'The man who helps the child is my grandfather.'

(17) ***ckae*** *[dael* **vie** *kampuŋ deek] cie ckae rɔbɑh kɲom*
dog REL it PROG sleep be dog of I
'The dog which is sleeping is my dog.'

(18) *mɛɛk* *[dael bak]*
branch (of tree) REL break
'The branch which is broken'
* *mɛɛk [dael* **vie** *bak]*
branch REL it break

(19) *kɑntray [dael cak krɑdaah]*
scissors REL prick paper
'The scissors which prick the paper'
* *kɑntray [dael* **vie** *cak krɑdaah]*
scissors REL it prick paper

(20) *laan [dael cuəl kmeeŋ]*
car REL collide child
'The car which hits the child'
* *laan [dael* **vie** *cuəl kmeeŋ]*
car REL it collide child

(21) **pteah** *[dael nuv khaet siemreap]*
house REL locate/situate province Siem Reap
'The house which is situated in Siem Reap'

* **pteah** *[dael* **vie** *nuv khaet siemreap]*
house REL it locate/situate province Siem Reap

From example (16) – (21), the NP *boʔrɑh* 'man' and *ckae* 'dog' can be relativized with the pronoun retention strategy since they are animate, whereas the NP *mɛɛk* 'branch of tree', *kɑntray* 'scissors', *laan* 'car' and *pteah* 'house'can not be relativized since they are inanimate.

3.2 Pronoun Retention in Complex Sentences
This section will illustrate the occurrence of the resumptive pronoun with relativized NPs in subordinate clauses, such as in verb complement clauses. In Khmer, the occurrence of the coreferential personal pronouns in subordinate clauses follows by and large with that in simple sentences. That is, subjects, indirect objects, and possessors in subordinate clauses can be relativized by pronoun retention whereas with direct objects this is impossible, as in the example below.

(22)

a. *kmeeŋ   kɯt   thaa* **boʔ-rɑh** *viey*   **ckae**
   child   think   that   man   hit   dog
   'The boy thinks that *the man* hits *the dog*.'

b. **boʔ-rɑh** *[dael   kmeeŋ   kɯt   thaa* **koat** *viey   ckae] kɯɯɯ*   (Subject)
   man   REL   child   think   that   he   hit   dog   be
   puɯ   rɔ-bɑh   kɲom
   uncle   of   I
   'The man who the boy thinks hit the dog is my uncle.'

c.* **boʔ-rɑh** *[dael   kmeeŋ   kɯt   thaa   Ø   viey   ckae] kɯɯɯ*   (Subject)
   man   REL   child   think   that   hit   dog   be
   puɯ   rɔ-bɑh   kɲom
   uncle   of   I
   'The man who the boy thinks hit the dog is my uncle.'

d. **ckae** *[dael   kmeeŋ   kɯt   thaa   boʔ-rɑh   baan   viey   Ø]* (Direct Object)
   dog   REL   child   think   thaa   man   PAST   hit
   rʊət-tɯɯv   bat   haay
   run away   disappear already
   'The dog that the boy thinks the man hit ran away.'

e. ***ckae** *[dael   kmeeŋ   kɯt   thaa   boʔ-rɑh   baan   viey   vie]* (Direct Object)
   dog   REL   child   think   thaa   man   PAST   hit   it
   rʊət-tɯɯv   bat   haay
   run away   disappear   already
   'The dog that the boy thinks the man hit ran away.'

(23)

a. *kɲom   dəŋ   thaa   boʔ-rɑh   ʔaoy   luy   **kmeeŋ***
   I   know   that   man   give   money **child**
   'I know that the man gives the child some money.'

b. **kmeeŋ** *[dael   kɲom   dəŋ   thaa   boʔ-rɑh   ʔaoy   luy   **vie**]*
   child   REL   I   know   that   man   give   money   he (younger)
   kɑmpuŋ   crieŋ   nɯɯləə chaak
   PROG   sing   on   stage
   'The child to whom I know the man gives some money is singing on the stage.'

c.* **kmeeŋ** *[dael   kɲom   dəŋ   thaa   boʔ-rɑh   ʔaoy   luy   Ø]*
   child   REL   I   know   that   man   give   money
   kɑmpuŋ   crieŋ   nɯɯləə chaak
   PROG   sing   on   stage
   'The child whom I know the man gives some money is singing on the stage.'

The resumptive pronouns in the subject and indirect object positions are optional with relativization in simple sentences but they are obligatorily present with relativization in subordinate clauses as in 22b. and 23b. The reason may be that the retrieval of the information in the simple sentences is easier than in the complex sentences. The obligatory occurrence of the resumptive pronoun with relativized NPs in complex sentences may help the hearers to retrieve the information.

4.   Pronoun Retention in Thai
4.1   *Pronoun Retention in Simple sentences*
Pronoun retention in Thai, and likewise the gap strategy, are also the 'primary relativization strategies' since they can be used to relativize subject NPs. Relative clauses formed by the pronoun retention strategy are mostly found in colloquial speech, and are rarely found in written texts, whereas the relative clauses formed by the gap strategy are found in both colloquial and written styles. Pronoun retention in Thai is much more flexible than in Khmer. The resumptive pronouns can occur if the relativized noun phrase is any of subject, direct object, indirect object, or possessor, as in the examples below.

(24) **(subject)**
   *mǎa [thîi **man** kin khɛnsîam] mák càʔ khěŋ-rɛɛŋ*
   dog   REL   it   eat   calcium   often   will   healthy
   'Dogs which take calcium are often healthy.'

(25) **(direct object)**
   *mǎa [thîi khun rák **man** mâak] taay lɛɛw*
   dog   REL   you   love   it   much   die   already
   'The dog which you love a lot has died.'

(26) **(indirect object)**
   *dèk [thîi chǎn hây ŋən (kɛɛ) **khǎw**] ʔaayúʔ hâa khùap*
   child   REL   I   give   money   to   s/he   age   five   year
   'The child to whom I gave some money is five years old.'

(27) **(possessor)**
   *phûuchaay [thîi mǎa (khɔɔŋ) **khǎw** nǐi pay] kamlaŋ sâw*
   man   REL   dog   of   s/he   run   go   PROG   sad
   'The man whose dog ran away is sad.'

Since Thai allows pronoun retention with all types of NPS, Thai doesn't violate any NP Accessibility Hierarchy claim, constraint, or generalization proposed by Keenan & Comrie.

Unlike Khmer, there is no constraint on relativizing subject NPs with pronoun retention. All kinds of NPs, animate or inanimate, can be encoded in the relative clauses by the personal pronouns, as in the examples below.

(28) **phûuchaay** *[thîi* **khǎw** *chûay dèk]* *pen* *khuntaa* *khɔ̌ɔŋ* *chǎn*
    man REL he help child be grandfather of I
    'The man who helps the child is my grandfather.'

(29) **mǎa** *[thîi* **man** *kamlaŋ làp]* *pen* *mǎa* *khɔ̌ɔŋ* *chǎn*
    dog REL it PROG sleep be dog of I
    'The dog which is sleeping is my dog.'

(30) **kìŋmáay** *[thîi* **man** *hàk]* *lòn* *maa* *càak* *tônmáay*
    branch (of tree) REL it break fall come from tree
    'The branch which is broken falls from the tree.'

(31) **rót** *[thîi* **man** *chon dèk]* *nǐi* *pay* *lɛ́ɛw*
    car REL it hit child run away go already
    'The car that hit the child already ran away.'

(32) **bâan** *[thîi* **man** *yùu nay bɔɔriween diaw kan]* *mii* *sǎam* *lǎŋ*
    house REL it be in area one together have three CLF
    'The houses that are in the same area include three houses.'

Although the occurrence of pronoun retention in Thai doesn't have any constraint relating to the semantic properties of the relativized NPs, it seems to have some limitation with the occurrence of the resumptive pronoun relating to the choice of the relative markers. It is found that relative clauses introduced by the *ʔan* marker, mostly found with relativized inanimate subjects, do not allow the resumptive pronouns to occur, whereas there seems to be no restriction with relative clauses introduced by the *thîi* marker and the *sîŋ* marker, as illustrated in the examples below.

(33)
a. * *khǎw* *dâay* *hây* *nɛɛwkhît [ʔan* **man** *pen* *prayòot sǎmràp thúuk khon]*
    he PAST give idea REL it be benefit for every people
    'He gave an idea which is beneficial for everyone.'
b. *khǎw* *dâay* *hây* *nɛɛwkhît [ʔan* Ø *pen* *prayòot sǎmràp thúuk khon]*
    he PAST give idea REL be benefit for every people
    'He gave an idea which is beneficial for everyone.'
c. *khǎw* *dâay* *hây* *nɛɛwkhît [***sîŋ*** **man** *pen* *prayòot sǎmràp thúuk khon]*
    he PAST give idea REL it be benefit for every people
    'He gave an idea which is beneficial for everyone.'
d. *khǎw* *dâay* *hây* *nɛɛwkhît [***thîi*** **man** *pen* *prayòot sǎmràp thúuk khon]*
    he PAST give idea REL it be benefit for every people
    'He gave an idea which is beneficial for everyone.'

(34)

a.* *nîi   pen   raaŋwan   [ʔan   man   yîŋyày   thîisùt   nay   chiiwît]*
   this   be   prize/reward   REL   it   big/great   superlatively   in   life
   'This is the prize which is the biggest in (my) life.'

b. *nîi   pen   raaŋwan   [ʔan   Ø   yîŋyày   thîisùt   nay   chiiwît]*
   this   be   prize/reward   REL   big/great   superlatively   in   life
   'This is the prize which is the biggest in (my) life.'

c. *nîi   pen   raaŋwan   [**thîi**   **man**   yîŋyày   thîisùt   nay   chiiwît]*
   this   be   prize/reward   REL   it   big/great   superlatively   in   life
   'This is the prize which is the biggest in (my) life.'

d. *nîi   pen   raaŋwan   [**sîŋ**   **man**   yîŋyày   thîisùt   nay   chiiwît]*
   this   be   prize/reward   REL   it   big/great   superlatively   in   life
   'This is the prize which is the biggest in (my) life.'

So far, there seems to be no limitation for pronoun retention with relative clauses introduced by *thîi* and *sîŋ* no matter whether the relativized NPs are subjects, objects, or possessors, and no matter whether the relativized NPs are animate or inanimate, concrete or abstract.

4.2 Pronoun Retention in Subordinate Clauses

The resumptive pronouns can encode the role of relativized subjects, direct objects, indirect objects and possessive NPs in subordinate clauses. Unlike Khmer, the occurrence of the resumptive pronouns is optional for relativized subjects, direct objects, indirect objects. With respect to possessors, some relative clauses with relativized possessive NPs obligatorily require the resumptive pronouns but others don't. It depends on the distance of the relationship between the relativized possessor and the possessed NP. If the relationship between the possessor and the possessed is quite close, like a man and his wife as in example (37), the resumptive pronoun is optional. If the relationship between the possessor and the possessed is quite distant, such as between a man and his house as in example (38), the resumptive pronoun is obligatorily present in the relative clause.

(35)

a. *dèk   khît   wâa   **phûuchaay**   tii   **măa***
   child   think that   **man**   hit   **dog**
   'The child thinks that the man hit the dog.'

b. ***phûuchaay**   [thîi   dèk   khît   wâa   (**khǎw**)   tii   măa]   nĭi   pay lɛ̂ɛw*
   man   REL   child   think   that   he   hit   dog   run away   go   already
   'The man that the child thinks hit the dog ran away.'

c. ***măa**   [thîi   dèk   khît   wâa   phûuchaay   tii   (**man**)]   nĭi   pay lɛ̂ɛw*
   dog   REL   child   think   that   man   hit   it   run away   go   already
   'The dog that the child thinks the man hit ran away.'

(36)

a. *chǎn   rûu   wâa   phûuchaay   hây   ŋən   **dèk***
   I   know   that   man   give   money   **child**
   'I know that the man gives the child some money.'

131

b. ***dèk*** *[thîi chǎn rûu wâa phûuchaay hây* ŋ**ən (khǎw)]** *pen nákrian*
   child REL I know that man give money he be student
   'The child to whom I know the man gives some money is a student.'

(37)
a. *chǎn rûu wâa phanrayaa khɔɔ̌ŋ* **phûuchaay** *pùay*
   I know that man of **man** sick
   'I know that the man's wife is sick.'

b. ***phûuchaay*** *[thîi chǎn rûu wâa phanrayaa (khɔɔ̌ŋ* **khǎw**)] *pùay mây maa*
   man REL I know that wife of he sick not come
   'The man whose wife I know is sick doesn't come.'

(38) ***phûuchaay*** *[thîi chǎn yùu bâan (khɔɔ̌ŋ)* **khǎw**] *pen yâat chǎn*
   man REL I live/stay house of he be relative I
   'The man whose house I live in is my relative.'

5.   Conclusion

It is found that the occurrence of pronouns in the relative clause is related to the syntactic-semantic relation of the noun phrase being relativized. In Thai, the resumptive pronoun can occur if the relativized noun phrase is any of subject, direct object, indirect object, or possessor. The occurrence of the resumptive pronoun in Khmer relative clauses seems to be more limited. Resumptive pronouns may occur with relativized subject, indirect object, or possessor, but not with direct object. Unlike Thai, the occurrence of the pronoun with a relativized possessor seems to be obligatory.

The distribution of pronoun retention in Khmer is particularly interesting from a more general theoretical perspective. According to Keenan and Comrie (1977), if pronoun retention is possible for a particular position on the Accessibility Hierarchy, then it must also be possible for all positions lower on the Accessibility Hierarchy. Thai does not violate this generalization, since pronoun retention is possible for all positions. But in Khmer, pronoun retention is possible for subjects, but not for direct objects, although direct objects are lower than subjects on the Accessibility Hierarchy, thus providing a direct counterexample to this particular claim of Keenan and Comrie (1977).

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