Relative clauses in Upper Necaxa Totonac

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Totonacan relative clauses

- Upper Necaxa Totonac (UNT) RCs as described in Beck (2004) look pretty dull
  - externally-headed or headless, gapped argument inside the clause
  - possible for all ranks on the Accessibility Hierarchy
  - introduced by a relativizer that distinguishes animacy (human/non-human)
    - relativizer has some properties of relative pronouns, but behaves more like a complementizer

- but, an expanded corpus and a little elicitation work shows that UNT
  - has rigid predicate-initial ordering (rigid anything is interesting in Totonacan)
  - allows both internally- and externally-headed RCs

- the comparative Totonacan data is incomplete, but it seems that
  - only Central Totonacan languages have the animacy distinction
  - Central Totonacan relativizers are related to pan-Totonacan interrogative pronouns

- this suggests some things about the Upper Necaxa relativizers
  - pronoun-like properties reflect diachrony, but
  - the presence of internally-headed constructions means synchronically they are complementizers
Totonacan languages

- approx. 253,000 speakers
- divided into two branches: Totonac and Tepehua
- 3 Tepehua languages: Pisaflores, Tlachichilco, Huehuetla
- Totonac has 2 main divisions: Misantla and Central
- Central consists of Northern, Sierra, and Lowland
- attention has been previously focused on morphology
- little work on sentence-level syntax
RCs in UNT: Inanimate heads

- Upper Necaxa Totonac (UNT) RCs are described in Beck (2004)
  - externally-headed or headless
  - gapped argument inside the clause
  - introduced by a relativizer that distinguishes animacy (human/non-human) of head

- a typical RC with an inanimate nominal head is shown in (1):

\[(1) \quad \text{yuxa ts₃m₃ źkₘ₃:n } [\text{tu: wan}_₂jk₃n \text{ “č₃:w₃”}] \]
\[\text{yux–a } \quad \text{ts₃m₃ } \quad \text{škₘ₃:n } [\text{tu: } \text{wan–n}–\text{kan } \emptyset \quad \text{č₃:w₃}] \]
\[\text{go.down–IMPF } \quad \text{that } \quad \text{water } \quad \text{NREL } \quad \text{say–BEN–IDF } \quad \emptyset \quad \text{sooty.water} \]

- ‘the water that they call “č₃:w₃” comes down’

- the head of the RC is źkₘ₃:n ‘water’

- źkₘ₃:n corresponds to a gap in the embedded clause

- RC is introduced by tu: ‘non-human relativizer’
  - tu: agrees in animacy (non-human) with the head of the RC
  - the relativizer is always on the left edge of the embedded clause
RCs in UNT: Animate heads

- an RC with an animate head is shown in (2)

(2) tačinʔọ:ɬ naščikán tsamá kristiánú [ti: xa: ka:le:ní ḳščikán]
    ta–čin–ʔọ–ɬ nak=š–čik–kán tsamá kristiánú
    3PL.SUB–arrive–TOT–PFV LOC=3PO–house–PL.PO that person

   [ti: xa: ka:–le:n–nî Ø ḳš–čik–kán]
   HREL NEG PL.OBJ–take.away–BEN 3PO–house–PL.PO
   ‘all the people, who didn’t lose their houses (in the flood) came to their houses’

- the head of the RC is kristiánú ‘person, people’

- kristiánú corresponds to a gap in the embedded clause

- RC is introduced by ti: ‘human relativizer’
  - ti: agrees in animacy (human) with the head of the RC
  - ti: does not agree in number
    - number is not a nominal inflectional category (all nouns have general number)
RCs in UNT: Headless

- Headless RCs are shown in (3) and (4)

(3) \[ \text{wiːɬ} [\text{ti: kili:a?špa:wakáɭ}] \]
\[ \text{wiːɬ} [\text{ti: kin-li-a?špa-wakáɭ}] \quad \emptyset \]
\[ \text{sit} \quad \text{HREL} \quad \text{1OBJ-INST-back.of.head–be.high} \quad \_ \_ \_ \_ \]
\[ ‘\text{there is someone resting their head on me’} \]

- Referent of the RC corresponds to a gap in the embedded clause
- The RC is introduced by \text{ti}: ‘human relativizer’

(4) \[ \text{a: wiːɬ} [\text{tu: puṭsapáː}] \]
\[ \text{a: wiːɬ} [\text{tu: puṭsá–pa:}] \quad \emptyset \]
\[ \text{there sit} \quad \text{NREL} \quad \text{look.for–PROG:2SG.SUB} \quad \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ \]
\[ ‘\text{there is what you are looking for’} \]

- Referent corresponds to a gap in the embedded clause
- The RC is introduced by \text{tu}: ‘non-human relativizer’
RCs in UNT: Accessibility

❖ subject-centred RC:

(5) ɪkɬoːpalá ɪʃčoxkán lakstín [tiː taʔn nakskwéla]
1SG.SUB–make–RPT 3PO–tortilla–PL.PO children HREL 3PL.SUB–go __ LOC=school
‘I make food again for the children that go to school’

❖ primary-object centred RC:

(6) wiʃ kalaksáktʃi [tiː tsex lʔatíːyʃa]
1SG.SUB–choose–2SG.SUB:PFV HREL well like–IMPF:2SG.SUB __
‘pick the one (girl) that you like best!’

❖ secondary-object centred RC:

(7) yaːwaːŋikán aʔtín [tuː liːlakaɬtaŋteːkán]
‘they stood up against it one (thing) that they could use to pull it tight’
RCs in UNT: Accessibility

❖ adjunct-centred RC

(8) ʔtín čik [xaː natatoːlá]
    aʔ–tín čik [xaː na–ta–tawilá Ø]
    CLF–one house where FUT–3PL.SUB–sit __
‘a house where they will live’

❖ predicate-centred RC

(9) tsamá puskát [ti: tanʔaːn šwaníː]
    tsamá puskát [ti: tanʔaːn iʃ–wan–ní: Ø]
    that woman HREL buttocks–indigenous.skirt PAST–be–PF __
‘that woman who was an indigenous woman’

❖ possessor-centred RC

(10) kašlawáka čik [tu: ląʔapáʔła iʃˈventana]
    fixed–make–IDF:PFV house NREL face–break–IMPF 3PO=window __
‘they fixed up the house whose windows are broken’

❖ comparative-centred RC

(11) ikpútsa čąːtín tsəmåxát [ti: aːčulá: tseːwaní či wiʃ]
    iš–pútsá čąː–tín tsəmåxát [ti: aːčulá: tseːwaní Ø či wiʃ]
    1SG.SUB–look.for CLF–one girl HREL more pretty __ like you
‘I’m looking for a girl who is prettier than you’

this structure is a little different:
• different relativizers (xa: ‘where’, ʔkšnī ‘when’)
• in situ locative NP would have clitic nak=
RCs in UNT: Constituent order

- 10 years later, we can add some more observations from texts and new elicitation
- matrix clauses allow all possible constituent orders

(12) .Dispatcher ka:maškí:ł gobierno ląʔškamaní:ní:n  
  ḭščik–kan ka:–maškí:–ł gobierno ląʔ–škamaní:n–ni:n  
  3PO–house–PL.PO PL.PO–give–PFV government APL–pauper–PL  
  ‘the government gave the poor people their houses’

  ka:maškí:ł gobierno ląʔškamaní:ní:n ḭščik–kan  
  gobierno ka:maškí:ł ląʔškamaní:ní:n ḭščik–kan  
  ląʔškamaní:ní:n ka:maškí:ł ḭščik–kan gobierno  
  V S PO SO  
  S V PO SO  
  PO V SO S, etc.

- in RCs, arguments can not intervene between relativizer and embedded verb

  3PO–house–PL.PO NREL PL.PO–give–PFV government APL–pauper–PL  
  ‘their houses that the government gave the poor people’

RCs in UNT: Constituent order

❖ most kinds of adverbials precede the verb in matrix clauses

(14)  
\[ \text{li:škamani:ntuŋká ţświːl naiʃčik tsamā puskāːt} \]

\[ \text{li:škamanːi=tuŋká} \quad \text{ţś–wiːl} \quad \text{nak=ţś–čik} \quad \text{tsamā} \quad \text{puskāːt} \]

\[ \text{INST–pauper=very} \quad \text{PAST–sit} \quad \text{LOC=3PO–house} \quad \text{that} \quad \text{woman} \]

‘the woman lived in great poverty in her house’

\[ \text{li:škamani:ntuŋká naiʃčik ţświːl tsamā puskāːt} \]

\[ \text{li:škamanːi=ntuŋká ţświːl tsamā puskāːt naʃčik} \]

\[ \text{li:škamani:ntuŋká tsamā puskāːt ţświːl naʃčik} \]

\[ *ţświːl li:škamani:ntuŋká naiʃčik tsamā puskāːt \]

❖ locative adverbials like naiʃčik ‘in her house’ may be pre-verbal but “prefer” not to be

❖ adverbials intervene between verb and relativizer in RCs

(15)  
\[ \text{čaːtín puskāːt [ti: li:škamanːi=n ţświːl naiʃčik]} \]

\[ \text{čaː–tín} \quad \text{puskāːt} \quad \text{[tiː liː–škamanːi=n ţś–wiːl nai=ţś–čik]} \]

\[ \text{CLF–one} \quad \text{woman} \quad \text{HREL} \quad \text{INST–pauper} \quad \text{PAST–sit} \quad \text{LOC=3PO–house} \]

‘a woman who lived in poverty in her house’

\[ \text{čaːtín puskāːt [tiː li:škamanːi:ntuŋká naiʃčik ţświːl]} \]

\[ *čaːtín puskāːt [tiː ţświːl liːškamanːi:ntuŋká naiʃčik] \]

other types of subordinate and complement clauses also show the same predicate-initial pattern
RCs in UNT: Internally-headed RCs

❖ a search through the corpus finds what appear to be internally-headed RCs

(16) ḥu:wa [ti: tas’o?aan án tsümäxá:n]
 ḥu:wa Ø [ti: ta-š’o?á-nan tsümäxá:t-n]
 many _ HREL 3PL.SUB–hug–DTRNS girl–PL

‘there are a lot of girls who hug’

❖ there are other possible interpretations of most of these
❖ here, we could be looking at a head-final RC ([ti: tas’o?aan án Ø] tsümäxá:n)
❖ NP has rigid ADJ-N order

❖ ... and a little probing shows us that these are, indeed, internally-headed

 fed.up 1OBJ–3PL.SUB–STM–face–say _ HREL just only 3PL.SUB–INST–DCS–hide–IMPF

tsämá ?awাčá:n ı̇š–tsì:–kán]
 that boy–PL 3PO–mother–PL.PO

‘those boys that hide behind their mother’s skirts really bother me’

❖ here, the internal head is not on the right edge of the RC
RCs in UNT: Internally-headed RCs

- the internally-headed RCs show the same syntactic properties as externally-headed RCs
  - adverbs continue to intervene between relativizer and predicate (17), (18)
  - constituent order is flexible ...

```
p vão kin-tа-mаʔa-laka-wан Ø [ti: tsax šma:n ta-li:-ta-tsэʔa-
fed.up 1OBJ-3PL.SUB-STM-face-say ___ HREL just only 3PL.SUB-INST-DCS-hide–IMPF

īš-тсэ:kан tsамэʔa ?awэcэʔa–n]
3PO–mother–PL.PO that boy–PL

‘those boys that hide behind their mother’s skirts really bother me’
```

- but arguments can not precede the embedded verb

```
   d. *p vão kintam-andalakawан ti: īstsэ:káŋ tali:tatsэʔa tsamэʔa ?awэcэʔa ... etc.
```
RCs in UNT: Internally-headed RCs

- internally-headed RCs show the same general accessibility
  - all of the following examples are “found” items in the corpus (in case anyone was wondering)

- subject-centred

  (20) kaląʔtsį̂, [ti: natawilá iʃ’áʔtá], nakšá: nama:ša:ąni:kán
  ka–láʔtsį̂ Ø [ti: na–tawilá iʃ–s’áʔtá]
  OPT–sec:2SG.SUB:PFV ___ HREL FUT–be.born 3PO–child

  nak=šá: na–ma:–ša:–ąn–ni:–kan
  LOC=sweatlodge FUT–CAUS=sweatlodge–go–CAUS–IDF

  ‘look, a child that will be born, they will bathe it in the sweatlodge’

- primary-object centred

  (21) xa: kłο:kųṭún [tu: kłο:má:ɬ kintaskuxút]
  NEG 1SG.SUB–make–DSD ___ NREL 1SG.SUB–make–PROG 1PO–job

  ‘I don’t want to do this job that I’m doing’
RCs in UNT: Internally-headed RCs

❖ secondary-object centred

thus how this INST–sit–PF __ NREL make–BEN–IDF

jiš–li:čįki:tawí:ɬ Patla
1PO–town Patla
‘that is the way their town that they named Patla was founded’

❖ the head of the RC, šli:čįki:tawí:ɬ ‘their town’, is the applied (secondary) object of the verb wanį ‘X names Y as Z’

❖ predicate-centred

(23) ɭikłą?apása [ti: šantí:ɬ šwanį: puská:t]
1SG.SUB–recognize–IMPF __ HREL shaman PAST–be–PF woman
‘I know a woman who was a shaman’
RCs in Totonacan

- given what we know about RCs in UNT, it might be worth comparing with other Totonacan

- family-tree still uncertain, but probably something like this:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Totonac</th>
<th>Tlachichilco</th>
<th>Pisaflores</th>
<th>Huehuetla</th>
<th>Misantla</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Central</td>
<td>Apapantilla</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Northern</td>
<td>Cerro Xinolatépetl</td>
<td>Filomeno Mata</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Lowland-Sierra</td>
<td>Lowland</td>
<td>Papantla</td>
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<td>Sierra</td>
<td>Coyutla</td>
<td>Coatepec</td>
<td>Olintla</td>
<td>Huehuetla</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ozelonacaxtla</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Zapotitlán</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- we can use this to see how UNT compares to other languages and groupings in Totonacan:
  - animacy distinction?
  - headless relatives?
  - general accessibility?
  - fixed linear order?
  - internally-headed RCs?
RCs in Totonacan: Tepehua

- the only discussion of RCs in Tepehua is Smythe-Kung’s (2007) description of Huehuetla

(24) štaʔamaqpanan hu: papa: nin [hu: ka: wa: lakak’iwin štaʔahun]
PAST–3PL.SUB–wash.clothes ART man–PL REL BLV FOC PREP–woods PAST–3PL.SUB–live __
‘the men that were living in the woods would wash their clothes’ (Smythe-Kung 2007: 590)

- the relativizer hu: is homophonous with the article hu:
- there is no animacy distinction
- subjects, direct objects, indirect objects, and obliques are accessible to relativization

Huehuetla also allows headless RCs

(25) [hu: šʔula:ta tam p’aqlati tu:mi:n]
[hu: š–ʔula:ta Ø tam p’aqlati tu:mi:n]
REL PAST–put–PF __ one chest money
‘the one who had a chest (full) of money’ (Smythe-Kung 2007: 597)

- headless RCs can only be subject-centred

judging from texts in Levy & Beck (2012), the facts seem the same in other Tepehua languages
RCs in Totonacan: Misantla

- RCs are not described in Misantla
- MacKay & Trechsel (2005) contains translations of some Spanish sentences containing RCs

\[(26) \text{táštuł hun čįškú? [hun ikmaqni:nił iščičí?]}\]

\[
\begin{array}{llllllll}
\text{ta–štu–la} & \text{hun} & \text{čįškú?} & \text{[hun} & \text{ik–maq–ni:–ni–l} & \text{iš–čičí?} & \text{Ø} \\
\text{INCH–out–PFV} & \text{DET} & \text{man} & \text{DET} & \text{1SG.SUB–CAUS–die–DAT–PFV} & \text{3PO–dog} & \text{__} \\
\end{array}
\]

‘the man whose dog I killed came out’ (MacKay & Trechsel 2005: 225)

- (26) is a secondary-object centered RC
- also attested are subject- and primary-object centred RCs
- like Tepehua, Misantla uses a determiner as a relativizer

\[(27) \text{iklá:mił hun čįškú? [taqapí:štán]}\]

\[
\begin{array}{llllllll}
\text{ik–la:–mił–na} & \text{hun} & \text{čįškú?} & \text{[taqapí–štán} & \text{Ø} \\
\text{1SG.SUB–CMT–come–CMT} & \text{DET} & \text{man} & \text{drunk–PAST} & \text{__} \\
\end{array}
\]

‘I come with the man who was drunk’ (MacKay & Trechsel 2005: 152)

- (27) and one other example (of a primary-object centred RC) suggest that the relativizer may be optional in some cases
- there are no unequivocal examples of headless RCs
RCs in Totonacan: Northern

❖ for the Northern group (which includes UNT), we have three examples from Apapantilla (Reid 1991: 58)

(28) čiłtsá wan čįškų [anți: tama:wa-kuṭun kušį]
arrive-PFV=now DET man HREL buy-DSD corn __
‘the man who wants to buy corn arrived’

(29) čiłtsá wan čįškų [anți: šą-aq-li:mą:
arrive-PFV=now DET man HREL PAST–1SG.SUB–wait–PROG __
‘the man who I am waiting for arrived’

(30) ikpa:tsanqa:ľ [anțu: kiwani]
1SG.SUB–forget–PFV NREL 1OBJ–say–BEN __
‘I forgot what he told me’

❖ here we see subject and primary-object centred RCs
❖ (30) is headless
❖ the relativizer makes an animacy distinction
❖ resembles UNT (the qu part is probably from demonstrative paradigm, related to M hun)
Zapotitlán (Sierra) RCs are introduced by relative pronouns, *ti* and *tu*

(31) šqaš:yaː *[n]*ti: šta:tapu:čuway
PAST–have–IMPF HREL PAST–marry–IMPF _ _  
‘she had a fiancé ’ (Aschmann 1984: 3)

(41) is headless and ambiguous as to centricity (could be S or SO-centred)

(32) liyanqoy šmura:ñkən waː *[n]*tu: *mpu:*muḥu:*qoːy šli:šqatnəkən
take–3PL–IMPF 3PO–bag–PL.PO that.one NREL put.into–3PL–IMPF 3PO–stake–PL.PO _ _  
‘they take their shoulder bags in which they put their stakes’ (Aschmann 1984: 20)

note the presence of *waː* ‘that one’ (described as a “focus particle” in Aschmann 1984)

*waː* is cognate with members of the demonstrative paradigms in other Totonacs  
(cf. the *an*- prefix in Apapantilla)

very frequent preceding RCs, including RCs without NP heads
RCs in Totonacan: Lowland-Sierra

- Information on RCs in other Lowland-Sierra languages is hard to come by
- All the group seems to use relativizers based on *ti:* ‘human’ and *tu:* ‘non-human’

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language</th>
<th>Relativizers</th>
<th>Animacy</th>
<th>Accessibility</th>
<th>Headless</th>
<th>Source</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Filomeno Mata</td>
<td>*ti/<em>tu:</em></td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>S, PO, SO</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>McFarland (2012)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cerro Xinolatépetl</td>
<td>*ti/<em>tu:</em></td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>S, SO</td>
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<td>Andersen (2012)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Papantla (Lowland)</td>
<td>*ti/<em>tu:</em></td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>S, PO, SO</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>Levy (2012)</td>
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<td>Coyulta</td>
<td>*ti/<em>tu:</em></td>
<td>yes</td>
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<td>Aschmann (n.d.)</td>
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<td>Coatepec</td>
<td>*ti/<em>tu:</em></td>
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<td>?</td>
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<td>Ozelonacaxtla</td>
<td><em>tiku/tuku</em></td>
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<td>PO</td>
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<td>Román Lobato</td>
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</table>
RCs in Totonacan: Summary

- the information is rather sketchy, but on the whole ...
- Totonacan seems generally to allow headless RCs
- there is general accessibility for objects (as far as we can tell)
- it is not possible to reach any conclusions about fixed ordering
  - it is true that the examples are nearly always predicate-initial
  - there is one exception in Ozelonacaxtla and one in Cerro Xinolatépetl
    - but these structures are not as clear as one might like
- there is no evidence for internally-headed RCs outside UNT
  - not terribly surprising, given that they are infrequent in discourse
- there is significant variation in the relativizer
  - Tepehua and Misantla use a determiner
  - Central Totonac uses a relativizer that is sensitive to animacy
Relativizers in Central Totonacan

- so where do these Central Totonacan relativizers come from?
- it turns out that they are homophonous with or similar to interrogative pronouns
  - pTn *ti:*(-) ‘who?’, *tu:*(-) ‘what?’
  - Tepehua seems to have lost the *ti/*tu animacy distinction for interrogatives
  - Misantla has not co-opted the *ti/*tu interrogatives as relativizers
  - in UNT, Filomeno Mata, Coatepec, Zapotitlán, and Olintla relativizers are homophonous with interrogatives
  - in Coyutla and Papantla, the relativizers are *ti/*tu but the interrogatives are *tiku/*túku
  - Apapantilla adds what look to be deictic elements to *ti/*tu bases
  - Zapotitlán frequently precedes RCs with a demonstrative element

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Totonac</th>
<th>Tepehua</th>
<th>Huehuetla</th>
<th>Pisaflores</th>
<th>Misantla</th>
<th>Apapantilla</th>
<th>UNT</th>
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- Tlachichilco
- Huehuetla
- Pisaflores
- Misantla
- Apapantilla
- UNT
- Filomeno Mata
- Papantla
- Coyutla
- Coatepec
- Olintla, Huehuetla
- Zapotitlán

- Tlachichilco
- Huehuetla
- Pisaflores
- Misantla
- Apapantilla
- UNT
- Filomeno Mata
- Papantla
- Coyutla
- Coatepec
- Olintla, Huehuetla
- Zapotitlán
Diachronic developments

- Central languages have adapted the pTn interrogative elements as relativizers
- There seem to be (at least) two possible scenarios for this:
  1. pTn tiː/tuː were exclusively interrogatives and pTn RCs were introduced by DET;
     - Central languages adopted the interrogatives as relativizers in place of DET
  2. tiː/tuː were interrogative/relative pronouns, and co-occurred with determiners
     - The Tepehua languages and Misantla dropped the relative pronoun, kept DET
     - The Central languages dropped DET and kept the relative pronoun
- #2 seems more likely, as some Central languages have RCs with traces of DET
  - Apapantilla qntiː/qntuː contain elements from pTn deictic system (Brown et al. 2014)
  - Zapotitlán wː is (at least diachronically) also a demonstrative pronominal element
- So pTn may have had both light-headed and appositive light-headed RCs
Light-headed and appositive light-headed RCs

❖ light-headed RC (Polish)

(33) Jan czyta to [co Maria czta]
Jan read this what Maria read
‘Jan reads what Maria reads’ (Citko 2004: 96)

❖ light-headed RC (Zapotitlán)

(34) čṵː̃puskaːt, na: šputsay wgt: [ⁿtu: ſwáqqоːy]
čṵː̃ puskaːt na: šputsay wgt: [tu š–wã–qоː–y]
then woman also PAST–look.for–IMPF that.one NREL PAST–eat–3PL.SUB–IMPF
‘then the woman, she also looks for that which they’d eat’ (Aschmann 1984: 15)

❖ appositive light-headed RC (Zapotitlán)

(35) liyanoqqоːy šmuraːlkan wgt: [ⁿtu: mp:mu:huːqоːy šli:šqatnáːkankan]
take–3PL–IMPF 3PO–bag–PL.PO that.one NREL put.into–3PL–IMPF 3PO–stake–PL.PO
‘they take along their bags in which they put their stakes’ (Aschmann 1984 2012: 20)

❖ pre-nominal head co-occurs with wgt:
❖ might have a literal reading like ‘… shoulder bags, those in which they put their stakes’
Complementizer or relative pronoun?

- connection to relative pronouns highlights an earlier uncertainty
- Aschmann (1984) treats Zapotitlán tiː/tuː as relative pronouns
- Beck (2004) treats tiː/tuː as complementizers in UNT
  - they are invariantly on the left-edge of the clause, never in situ
  - they do not indicate grammatical number
- but they do have some properties associated with relative pronouns
  - animacy agreement
  - homophonous and cognate with interrogatives
  - form a part of negative pronouns—xa: tiː ‘nobody’, xa: tuː ‘nothing’
- the diachronic story seems to explain this nicely
- but does that mean that synchronically they are still relative pronouns?
to answer this, we need to think a little about syntax …

(36) \(\text{ʔawáčá} \quad [\text{ti: tali:tatséʔa įstsji:káŋ}]\)

\(\text{ʔawáčá–n} \quad [\text{ti: ta–li–ta–tséʔ–a} \quad Įš–tsj–káŋ]\)


‘those boys that hide behind their mother’s skirts’

Difference between a relative pronoun and a complementizer

a relative pronoun lives “inside” the embedded clause, occupying an argument slot

a complementizer is a “bridge” subordinating the embedded clause to the head noun
Complementizer or relative pronoun?

- the existence of internally-headed RCs like (37) suggests the latter structure is preferable

(37) [ti: tali:tatséʔa ?awáčán įstsį:kán]

‘those boys that hide behind their mother’s skirts’

internally-headed with complementizer

internally-headed with relative pronoun
Types of relative clauses

- this reduces the differences between the three types of RCs to differences in what is elided in “surface” form
Conclusions

❖ thus, the UNT relativizer seems best analyzed as a complementizer
  ❖ a relative pronoun would compete for an argument slot with the head
    in an internally-headed RC

❖ the pronoun-like properties of the relativizer come from its
diachronic relationship to interrogatives

❖ whether this argumentation can be extended to other Central
languages awaits further investigation
  ❖ it is unknown if other languages have the internally-headed
    construction
  ❖ many of the other basic facts remain to be discovered

❖ so maybe relative clauses in Totonacan aren’t so dull after all …
References

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Thanks

❖ to my consultants and colleagues who made this work possible

❖ special thanks to Paulette Levy and Jim Watters

❖ the usual disclaimers apply