Multiple Embedding of Relative Clauses in Karitiana

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Karitiana is a Tupian language (Arikém branch) spoken in Rondônia by approximately 400 people. It has been described in theses and dissertations by David Landin (1984), Luciana Storto (1999), Caleb Everett (2006), Thiago Coutinho-Silva (2008), Luciana Sanchez-Mendes (2009), Andrea Marques (2010), and Ivan Rocha (2011), as well as in several papers by these authors and others, such as Daniel Everett, Jean-Pierre Angenot, Ana München and Didier Demolin. Storto (2012) analyzes the behavior of subordinate clauses in Karitiana, and describes relatives in the language as head-internal. Our goal in this paper is to examine cases of multiple embedding in Karitiana relative clauses.

In (1), we have a biclausal sentence containing a relative clause - marked in square brackets - whose internal head is ōwã ‘child’:

(1) y-py-so’oot-yn yn [São Paulo pip ōwã aka]-ty
   1-assert-see-nfut I [São Paulo in child be]-obl
   ‘I saw the girl who lives in São Paulo’

The main verb so’oot requires its internal argument to be marked with the oblique postposition –ty (Rocha 2011, Storto & Rocha 2012). In (1), the entire relative is the oblique argument of the main verb. It is possible, moreover, to embed more than one clause, as in (2). In this example, the oblique argument of the main verb (obl2) is the complex clause ‘the girl who lives in São Paulo of whom Pedro talked about’ and the oblique argument of haadha (obl1) is ‘the girl who lives in São Paulo’.

(2) y-py-so’oot-yn yn [[São Paulo pip ōwã aka]-ty Pedro haadna]-ty
    1-assert-see-nfut I [[São Paulo in child be]-obl₁, Pedro say]-obl₂
    ‘I saw the girl who lives in São Paulo of whom Pedro talked about’

In example (3) ‘child’ is the oblique argument of the verb ‘to say’ and the whole subordinate clause is the oblique argument of the verb ‘to see’:

(3) y-py-so’oot-yn yn [ōwā-ty Pedro haadna [São Paulo pip i-aka]]-ty
    1-assert-see-nfut I [child-obl₁, Pedro say [São Paulo in she-be]-be]-obl₂
    ‘I saw the girl that Pedro said that (she) lives in São Paulo’
In other cases of multiple embedding, as in (4), there is more than one oblique marker for each verb, and for this reason the structure of this type of sentence is not so clear:

(4) y-py-so’oot-yn yn [[taso-ty [Pedro haadna]-ty [ombaky oky]-ty]-ty
  1-assert-see-nfut I [[man-obl₁ Pedro say]-obl₂ [jaguar kill]-obl₃]-obl₄
‘I saw the man of whom Pedro talked about to have killed the jaguar’

The verb oky ‘to kill’ is transitive and, as such, does not have an oblique argument. The last oblique postposition (obl₄) marks the whole subordinate clause as an argument of the verb ‘to be’, the penultimate oblique postposition (obl₃) marks the clause [ombaky oky] as the oblique argument of haadn, which already has ‘man’ as an oblique argument (obl₁). The antepenultimate oblique (obl₂) marks the relative [tasoty Pedro haadna] as an oblique argument of the verb ‘to see’. The structure of sentences of this last type will be discussed in detail with examples in which verbs of different valencies are employed in order to identify the origin and function of each oblique marker.

References


