

MATU RELATIVE CLAUSES

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Matu is a Kuki-Chin language primarily spoken in Matupi Township, Chin State, Myanmar. According to *Ethnologue* (Lewis 2009, accessed February 1, 2010), it has 60,000 speakers and belongs to the Southern Chin subgroup. (1) is a simple intransitive Matu sentence.

- (1) *Te kah hlang te Matupi ah a cet.*
 that GEN man that to 3 go
 'That man went to Matupi'

It illustrates the characteristic head final word order, split deixis and verb agreement system of Kuki-Chin languages. Here *a*, glossed as '3', marks third person agreement of the verb *cet* 'go' with its subject *te kah hlang te* 'that man'. See Bedell (2009) for details.

(2), (3) and (5) contain relative clauses based on (1), enclosed in brackets [].

- (2) [*Matupi ah a cet*] *hlang te (ka hmuh).*
 to 3 go man that 1 see
 '(I saw) the man that went to Matupi'
- (3) [*Matupi ah aka cet*] *hlang te (ka hmuh).*
 to 3-REL go man that 1 see
 '(I saw) the man that went to Matupi'

(2) and (3) illustrate an 'external' head: the noun *hlang* 'man' is outside the clause, which precedes and modifies it, but is understood as the clause subject.

(5) illustrates a 'internal' head: the clause subject *te kah hlang te* is understood as the object of the main verb like *hlang te* in (2) and (3).

- (4) [*Te kah hlang te Matupi ah a cet*] *te (ka hmuh).*
 that GEN man that to 3 go that 1 see
 '(I saw) that man go to Matupi'
- (5) [*Te kah hlang te Matupi ah aka cet*] *te (ka hmuh).*
 that GEN man that to 3-REL go that 1 see
 '(I saw) the man that went to Matupi'

(3) and (5) illustrate the relative marker *ka*: in externally headed relative clauses like (3) it is optional, but in internally headed clauses like (5) it is obligatory. (4) is identical to (5) except for the absence of *ka*; it cannot be understood as a relative construction. The paper will explore these matters in greater detail.

Lewis, M. Paul (ed.), *Ethnologue: Languages of the World*, Sixteenth edition. Dallas, Tex.: SIL International, 2009. Online version: <http://www.ethnologue.com/>

G. Bedell, 'Agreement in Matu', *Payap Working Papers in Linguistics* 5, 2009. Online version: <http://ic.payap.ac.th/graduate/linguistics/wp-vol5.php>