



An Analysis of Relative Clauses found in the Dhammapada of “Treasury of Truth” Translated by Ven. Weragoda Sarada Maha Thero

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Abstract

This research was two objectives: 1) to analyze the types and forms of relative clauses found in The Dhammapada by Ven. Weragoda Sarada Maha Thero 2) to determine the frequency of usage of relative clauses in The Dhammapada by Ven. Weragoda Sarada Maha Thero. The study is qualitative research in nature focusing on a documentary method through reading and studying based on the Buddhist book of Dhammapada concerning the topic of the problem taken from 14 stories in the Buddhist Sutta Pitaka of Yamaka Vagga (Twin Verses) presented from the Suttanta Pitaka. The data were collected and used to apply for analysis designed by the researcher under qualitative method from the Dhammapada of stories translated by Ven. Weragoda Sarada Maha Thero. The data analysis led to a comprehensive understanding of the method of the study based on the critical analysis of syntactic knowledge. The result of research found as follow: The textual analysis of fourteen stories revealed that relative clauses constitute a crucial stylistic and grammatical device in Buddhist narrative discourse. Five principal forms were identified: (a) relative pronoun as subject, (b) relative pronoun as object, (c) relative pronoun as object of a preposition, (d) possessive relative clause, and (e) adverbial relative clause of place or time. In addition, reduced relative clauses were also found, reflecting efforts to maintain narrative conciseness. Restrictive relative clauses dominated the text, serving to identify and specify individuals and events, whereas non-restrictive forms provided elaboration and moral emphasis. For the second objective, a total of 86 relative clauses were recorded, averaging 6–7 per story. The relative pronoun as subject was the most frequent type, while the possessive form was least frequent. The most common markers included *who*, *which*, *that*, *where*, *when*, and *whose*. The findings indicate a patterned and consistent distribution, aligning with oral narrative traditions that prioritize cohesion, clarity, and the reinforcement of doctrinal themes. In conclusion, the study demonstrates that relative clauses in the Yamaka Vagga serve a dual function. Linguistically, they enhance syntactic clarity and textual cohesion. Narratively, they embed moral and doctrinal significance into characters and events, highlighting karmic consequences and ethical teachings. The consistent use of relative clauses across all stories underscores their central role in Buddhist narrative style and their importance as a translation strategy in conveying both grammatical precision and spiritual instruction.

Keywords: Relative Clauses, The Dhammapada, Yamaka Vagga, Buddhist Narrative Style

1. Introduction

In that modern era, there were a lot of variations of language used in the community. A member of a society of a language usually consisted of a variety of people with different social status and cultural background that were not the same. Since there were many backgrounds and different environments for every human being, languages as a tool of communication were varied. Language variety were variations of the language used in situations, circumstances, or for specific needs. Language was the faculty for communication by speech sound, was a universal characteristic of human race.

Syntax was a study that discussed the structure of a sentence where there were several components that must be understood. Syntax made phrases and sentences an object of analysis. According to (Yule, 2006), “when we concentrated on the structure and ordering of components within a sentence, we were studying the syntax of a language.” It meant that syntax was one of the branches of linguistics that studied rules that determined how words formed phrases and phrases formed sentences. The sentences could be analyzed by representation of syntactic structures. Representation of syntactic structures could be presented in three ways: statements of the correct sequence of the parts of speech (syntactic categories), by series of transformational rules and by parsing diagrams. Syntactic categories where indefinable sentences were only those components that followed the words and did not undergo any change or transformation. Transformational rule was the sentence began to be determined syntactic structure simply by issuing two elements of the sentence. The two main elements were NP and VP. Parsing diagrams where the parts of a sentence were shown in a graphical way that emphasized the hierarchical relationships between the components of a sentence. Clauses were the principal structures of which sentences were composed.

A sentence might consist of one or more clauses. Clauses were classified in three important ways:

1. In terms of the clause elements (subject, verb, etc.) from which they were constructed, and the verb patterns which were formed from these elements.
2. In terms of the amount of use which a clause made of verb phrase structure. On this, we distinguished between finite clauses, non-finite clauses, and verbless clauses.
3. In terms of clauses' function, i.e. the function a clause performed in a sentence; e.g. whether it was nominal clauses, an adverbial clause, and adjectival clauses.

A clause might be an independent clause, or dependent clause. In terms of dependent clause, the clause could be differentiated based on their grammatical function as nominal clause, adverbial clause, and relative clause. Relative clause was a dependent clause that functioned as an adjective: that was, it modified a noun or pronoun. For this reason, relative clauses were also called adjective clause.

The relative clause was an important part of learning English for understanding the relative clause required a high comprehension because it included material that was quite difficult because of the relative clause contained in a complex sentence that had one independent clause with at least one dependent clause. Oshima & Hogue (1999) said that a relative clause was a dependent clause that functioned as an adjective; it modified a noun or pronoun. For this reason, a relative clause was also similarly known as an adjectival clause. Restrictive clause (essential/defining relative clause) was a clause added in a sentence, necessary in that sentence because it affected the meaning that existed in the sentence and was not accompanied by a comma. While Non-restrictive clause (non-essential/non-defining relative clause) was a clause added in a sentence but not required, the presence of a non-restrictive clause in a sentence was indicated by a comma.

A relative clause was introduced by its relaters. There were two types of relaters; relative pronoun and relative adverb. The relative pronoun consisted of who, whom, whose, which, and that. On the other hand, relative adverbs consisted of where, when and why. Quirk

et al. (1985) pointed out that a relative clause had two types namely restrictive relative clause and non-restrictive relative clause. The semantic relation between a clause and its relater might be either restrictive or non-restrictive.

Literature was a part of human culture which could not be detached from daily life. Literature was how writers expressed their true feelings into written words. According to (Roberts & Jacobs, 2003), Literature meant compositions that told stories, dramatized situations, expressed emotions, analyzed and advocated ideas. Language and literature related to each other. Literature was one of the most important majors in studies. By learning literature, we knew how the language was produced, we could transfer meanings, values, cultures, socials, etc. One of literary works that most people liked was novel. It was a kind of literary works which was very popular in the modern culture.

In novel, the writer made a sentence with its structure including grammar. A sentence had one or more main clause. According to Eastwood (1994) clauses and sub clauses. Meanwhile, (Seaton & Mew, 2007) stated that, a sentence was a group of words that expressed a complete thought. A sentence must have had a subject and a verb, but it might or might not have had an object. There were four kinds of sentences: declarative sentence, interrogative sentence, imperative sentence and exclamatory sentence. Every language had its grammar. In English, grammar held an important role to be good at English, one should have comprehended the structure. One of the English grammars was relative clause. Azar (1999) stated that a clause was a group of words containing a subject and a verb. A relative clause was also called adjective clause derived from a basic structure consisting of more than one sentence. Adjective clause was a dependent clause that modified a noun. It described, identified, or gave further information about a noun. Meanwhile, (Huddleston & Pullum, 2010) said that a relative clause was a special kind of subordinate clause whose primary function was as modifier to a noun or nominal.

Dhammapada was one of the best-known books of the Pitaka. It was a collection of the teachings of the Buddha expressed in clear, pithy verses. These verses were culled from various discourses given by the Buddha in the course of forty-five years of his teaching, as he travelled in the valley of the Ganges (Ganga) and the sub-mountain tract of the Himalayas. These verses were often terse, witty and convincing. Whenever similes were used, they were those that were easily understood even by a child, e.g., the cart's wheel, a man's shadow, a deep pool, flowers. Through these verses, the Buddha exhorted one to achieve that greatest of all conquests, the conquest of self; to escape from the evils of passion, hatred and ignorance; and to strive hard to attain freedom from craving and freedom from the round of rebirths. Each verse contained a truth (dhamma), an exhortation, a piece of advice.

In that study, the researcher attempted to analyze the syntactic analysis of relative clauses used in the religious literature of the world "The Dhammapada" that pre-eminently represented men continued urge towards the spiritual. The Dhammapada occupied a place of high distinction. Its sacred contents unceasingly influenced human thought, holding aloft the torch of knowledge to light the path of men in their quest for truth and inner solace. In the global context of that time, the Dhammapada evolved into the stature of an outstanding treasure of the common human heritage, transcending manmade borders and boundaries and rising above limitations imposed by time. The Dhammapada, in short, was among the handful of gems of sacred literature esteemed by people all over the globe, irrespective of cleavages of creed, faith and variegated religious professions. The primary purpose of the present English rendering of The Dhammapada, under the title *The Treasury of Truth*, was to take the word of the Buddha further afield, in a verbal and visual idiom that would have greater appeal to the modern mind. The eternal wisdom embodied in the verses of The Dhammapada held within it

the potential to bring tranquility to men and women troubled by the stresses and conflicts of life as it was being lived by a good majority of the people in that world of disharmony and distress. In spite of the deeply felt need of the contemporary world to yearn for peace, solace and tranquility, the word of the Buddha was not generally presented in a frequency that throbbed to the rhythm of the modern mind-set.

The rationale of the present translation, therefore, was to bring The Dhammapada closer to generations who were brought up right round the globe on a staple fare of visual messages emanating in multiple colour, from the world's visual primary media—both of electronic and print categories. In consequence, The Treasury of Truth had, as its most prominent core feature, a series of 423 specially commissioned illustrations, at the rate of one per stanza in the Dhammapada. The researcher selected in order to analyze the syntactic study for relative clauses occurring in this illustrated book that was taken from Yamaka Vagga (Twin Verses).

During Pali language learning, the learners who were monks and novices faced the problems on how to use relative clauses in Pali translation into Thai, they found it difficult to understand the usage of relative pronouns, so they were wrong in writing because they did not know what relative pronoun would be used in the sentences. Many of them incorrectly used relative pronouns primarily such as which, that, whom, whose, and who. It was supported by the teacher. The teacher said that mistakes that were often made by learners in making the sentence relative clause were that they could not distinguish the usefulness of each of these relative pronouns (who, which, whose, that, where, and whom).

In light of the aforementioned issue, and due to the insufficient understanding of relative clauses among learners, the researcher conducted the study focusing on analyzing the syntactic structures and errors related to the use of relative clauses by Pali learners, specifically monks and laypeople. Pali language instruction was offered at various educational institutions across both Bangkok and the provinces, encompassing temples, schools, and universities. Relative clauses were chosen as the central topic of this investigation, as they were frequently encountered in both written and oral translations. Furthermore, many students continued to experience confusion regarding their syntactic structure and usage. This study, therefore, sought to examine the syntactic functions of relative pronouns within relative clauses as they appeared in the stories of the Dhammapada. Additionally, the study aimed to serve as a valuable resource for writers, educators, Pali learners, and future researchers, while also encouraging further exploration into the application of relative clauses in Pali language studies.

2. Objectives of the Research

The objectives of the research were as follows:

- 1). To analyze the types and forms of relative clauses found in The Dhammapada by Ven. Weragoda Sarada Maha Thero.
- 2). To determine the frequency of usage of relative clauses in The Dhammapada by Ven. Weragoda Sarada Maha Thero.

3. Research Methodology

This study employed a qualitative research design, as the primary objective was to explore and analyze the types and forms of relative clauses as they appear in the Buddhist

canonical text *The Dhammapada* translated by Ven. Weragoda Sarada Maha Thero. Qualitative research was considered appropriate for this investigation because it allows for in-depth examination of linguistic structures within authentic texts, enabling the researcher to capture both syntactic patterns and their narrative significance.

Research Instruments

In conducting this study, the researcher employed documentary-based research instruments, which refer to the techniques, tools, and materials applied to systematically gather and analyze data. Unlike quantitative research that relies on surveys or testing instruments, qualitative documentary research emphasizes the careful selection and analysis of primary texts that serve as the foundation for interpretation.

The primary instrument of this research was the Buddhist canonical text *The Dhammapada*, in the English translation by the Venerable Weragoda Sarada Maha Thero. This version was selected as the main source because of its scholarly reliability, linguistic accessibility, and close adherence to the original Pali text. The *Dhammapada* provided a corpus of Buddhist narrative discourse in which relative clauses appear as significant grammatical and stylistic devices. The text was treated as a primary source for data extraction, offering authentic material for examining syntactic features in the context of Buddhist literature.

In addition to the primary text, the researcher applied analytical instruments grounded in linguistic and syntactic theory. These included frameworks for classifying relative clauses according to their syntactic functions (subject, object, prepositional object, possessive, and adverbial) and distinguishing between restrictive, non-restrictive, and reduced forms. This theoretical framework functioned as a guiding tool to ensure systematic and consistent analysis across the selected stories. The instrumental procedure consisted of three stages:

1. Identification – reading and re-reading the *Dhammapada* to locate and extract sentences containing relative clauses.
2. Classification – categorizing the identified clauses according to type, form, and function based on established syntactic criteria.
3. Interpretation – analyzing the distribution and narrative role of relative clauses within the stories to reveal their stylistic and doctrinal significance.

By integrating the text of the *Dhammapada* as the primary research instrument with theoretical linguistic frameworks as analytical tools, the study ensured both textual authenticity and academic rigor. This methodological combination allowed the researcher to achieve a comprehensive understanding of the syntactic and stylistic functions of relative clauses in Buddhist narrative discourse.

Data Collection

The present study employed a documentary method, emphasizing a syntactic analysis of relative clauses in the religious literary text *The Dhammapada*. This Buddhist scripture, often referred to as “*The Treasury of Truth*,” has long been regarded as a timeless spiritual guide, transcending geographical, cultural, and religious boundaries. The choice of *The Dhammapada* as the primary source for data collection was based on its unique position as both a literary masterpiece and a doctrinal text that embodies the teachings of the Buddha in a manner accessible to global audiences. Its narrative and stylistic richness make it especially suitable for investigating linguistic phenomena such as relative clauses.

The English translation of *The Dhammapada* by Ven. Weragoda Sarada Maha Thero served as the primary data source. This translation was chosen for its scholarly accuracy and clarity, which allowed the researcher to systematically identify and analyze relative clause structures. To support the analysis, secondary references, such as textbooks and scholarly works on syntax and relative clauses, were also consulted. These supplementary materials provided a comparative basis for evaluating the linguistic features of the text.

The process of data collection followed a systematic and multi-step procedure:

1. Comprehensive Reading: The researcher carefully read the entire English translation of *The Dhammapada* to gain familiarity with its overall content, themes, and linguistic features.

2. Textual Scrutiny: Specific attention was paid to the *Yamaka Vagga* (Twin Verses), consisting of fourteen stories, which formed the scope of this study. Each story was examined line by line to locate and highlight sentences containing relative clauses. As for reference to linguistic frameworks alongside the reading, the researcher consulted academic references on syntax and relative clauses to establish clear definitions, classification systems, and analytical categories. This ensured that the identification of clause types was grounded in established linguistic theory.

3. Identification and Highlighting: Instances of relative clauses were marked directly in the text, with notes made on their grammatical structure, syntactic function, and discourse role. Key markers such as *who*, *which*, *that*, *where*, *when*, and *whose* were used as indicators in the identification process.

4. Classification and Categorization – The collected clauses were classified into their respective types and forms: subject relative clauses, object relative clauses, prepositional object relatives, possessive relatives, and adverbial relatives. Reduced forms and distinctions between restrictive and non-restrictive clauses were also noted. Then, for tabulation of data as the data were organized into tables to represent the frequency of each type and function of relative clause. This step facilitated a clearer quantitative overview of the distribution patterns across the fourteen stories.

5. Interpretation and Synthesis: Finally, the classified data were critically interpreted in relation to both linguistic theory and Buddhist narrative style. Patterns of usage were analyzed to draw conclusions about their syntactic, stylistic, and doctrinal significance.

The overall method combined content analysis with syntactic examination. This enabled the researcher to not only quantify the occurrences of relative clauses but also to interpret their role in maintaining textual cohesion, enhancing narrative clarity, and conveying moral and doctrinal teachings. Through this rigorous process of data collection and analysis, the study was able to achieve its objectives: identifying the types and forms of relative clauses in *The Dhammapada* and determining their frequency and functional significance in Buddhist narrative discourse.

Data Analysis

The researcher utilized documentary to analyzed the data. When the researcher attempted to analyse using certain measurement based on the qualitative linguistic knowledge. The researcher examined the stylistic and grammatical device of English grammar. The researcher then gathered data on the relative clause definitions, types, and functions found in Pali Dhammapada texts translated by Ven. Weragoda Sarada Maha Thero predicates. This study explored documentary sources as the Buddhist Sutta Pitaka of Yamaka Vagga (Twin Verses) as described in 14 stories based on the selected text for this study, such an example of “*the story of the Monk Cakkhupāla*” (Verse 1), contains several examples of relative clauses embedded within the narrative. The data are presented according to the types and forms of relative clauses, including restrictive, non-restrictive, defining, and non-defining structures as presented in the table such the story of Cakkhupāla can be grouped as follows:

Table 1 types and forms of relative clauses

NNo.	Relative Clause	Type	Function
11	“with reference to Cakkhupāla, a blind monk”	Non-defining / Appositive	Adds descriptive detail

22	“the monk killing the insects”	Defining / Reduced	Specifies action of the monk
33	“those living insects”	Reduced (participle)	Narrows meaning of noun phrase

The researcher has identified the relative clauses found in the most frequent form: *who* (for people) and *which* (for objects and abstract entities) and for less frequent but important forms: *where* (place), *that* (defining identification), and *whose* (possession). The number of relative clauses per story ranges showing consistency in narrative style. The high and consistent frequency of relative clauses in the *Yamaka Vagga* is not accidental. It is justified by their functional importance in: 1) Identifying characters and actions, 2) Clarifying narrative details, 3) Emphasizing moral and doctrinal lessons, and 4) Maintaining a coherent and engaging storytelling style.

Thus, the presence of relative clauses is a central grammatical and rhetorical feature that supports both the literary richness and the didactic purpose of the *Dhammapada Commentary*. In conclusion, the *Yamaka Vagga* demonstrates a rich and consistent use of relative clauses as a narrative strategy. They function to identify key figures, describe qualities, and situate events in specific contexts, thereby linking moral lessons with vivid storytelling.

4. Results

The researcher has read and analyzed the brief stories in the Buddhist Sutta Pitaka of Yamaka Vagga (Twin Verses) presented in Chapter I - Yamaka Vagga as described in 14 stories consisting in twin verses as documentary data. Therefore, the researcher found only five types and functions of relative clause from six types and functions of relative clause as mentioned. The types and functions found, are: 1) Relative pronoun as subject 2) Relative pronoun as object 3) Possessive relative clause 4) Relative pronoun as object of preposition and 5) Adverbial relative clause

1. The result of the classification types and forms of relative clauses found in The Dhammapada texts by Ven. Weragoda Sarada Maha Thero.

This study explored documentary sources as the Buddhist Sutta Pitaka of Yamaka Vagga (Twin Verses) as described in 14 stories based on the selected text for this study, the Story of the Monk Cakkhupāla (Verse 1), contains several examples of relative clauses embedded within the narrative. The findings are presented according to the types and forms of relative clauses, including restrictive, non-restrictive, defining, and non-defining structures as follows:

Table 2: An example of analysis of Types and Functions of Relative Clauses in the Story of Cakkhupāla, the relative clauses identified as grouped follows:

No.	Relative Clause	Type	Function
1	“with reference to Cakkhupāla, a blind monk”	Non-defining Appositive	/ Adds descriptive detail
2	“the monk killing the insects”	Defining Reduced	/ Specifies action of the monk
3	“those living insects”	Reduced (participle)	Narrows meaning of noun phrase
4	“if her eyes were completely cured”	Conditional Restrictive	/ Limits the promise context
5	“they were perfectly cured”	Embedded Complement	/ Clarifies truth vs. deception

6	“the ox yoked to the cart”	Reduced participle)	(past Defines the noun “ox”
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The result from above table 2 presented the details of the study in the format analysis based on the types and forms of relative clauses found in the text that illustrated through careful examination of the text, the following relative clauses were identified:

1. “The Buddha spoke this verse, *with reference to Cakkhupāla, a blind monk.*”
This is the relative clause type of non-defining relative clause (appositive structure). Explanation: The clause adds descriptive information about Cakkhupāla but is not essential for identifying him.

2. “The Buddha asked them whether they had seen the monk *killing the insects.*”
This is the defining relative clause (reduced form with present participle) was used in this sentence. It is a participial phrase “killing the insects” functions as a relative clause, specifying what kind of action was being questioned.

3. “Just as you had not seen him *killing, so also he had not seen those living insects.*”
This is the reduced relative clause (“living insects” = insects *that were living*). The adjective “living” is derived from a reduced relative clause, defining the noun more precisely.

4. “That woman had promised to become his slave, together with her children, *if her eyes were completely cured.*”
This is the defining conditional clause with a relative sense. The clause specifies the condition under which the promise applies, functioning like a restrictive relative element.

5. “She told him that her eyes were getting worse when, in fact, *they were perfectly cured.*”
This is the embedded clause (complement with relative value). The clause “they were perfectly cured” is an embedded clause that indirectly modifies the preceding proposition.

6. “This is very much like the wheel of a cart *following the hoofs of the ox yoked to the cart.*”
This is the reduced relative clause (“the ox *that is yoked* to the cart”). The present participle “yoked” is a reduced form of a relative clause that modifies “ox.”

The results of the syntactic analysis of relative clauses in “the story of Mattakundali” as illustrated in the Table 3 of analysis of Types and Functions of Relative Clauses in the Story of Mattakundali as grouped follows:

Table 3 of analysis of Types and Functions of Relative Clauses in the Story of Mattakundali

No.	Relative Clause	Type	Function
1	“...whose father, Adinnapubbaka, was very miserly...”	Defining (possessive)	Specifies family identity
2	“...ornaments ... were made by himself...”	Reduced	Defines how objects were made
3	“...Mattakundali lying on the verandah...”	Reduced	Describes physical position
4	“...the youth, who was facing the interior of the house.”	Defining	Describes reference of youth
5	“...reborn in the Tāvātimsa world, where he enjoyed glory.”	Relative adverbial “where”	Describes place of rebirth

The result from above table 3 presented the details of the study in the format analysis based on the types and forms of relative clauses found in the text that illustrated through careful examination of the text, the following relative clauses were identified:

1. “...Mattakundali was a young Brāhmin, *whose father, Adinnapubbaka, was very miserly* and never gave anything in charity.”

This is the defining relative clause (possessive “whose”). It specifies family relation; identifies the miserly father.

2. “...gold ornaments for his only son were made by himself to save payment for workmanship.”

This is the reduced relative clause (“ornaments that were made by himself”). It is defined how the ornaments were made.

3. “...the Buddha arising early from his deep meditation of compassion saw, in his Net of Knowledge, Mattakundali lying on the verandah.”

This is the reduced relative clause (“Mattakundali who was lying on the verandah”). It provides situational detail about the boy.

4. “...the Buddha sent forth a ray of light to attract the attention of the youth, who was facing the interior of the house.”

This is the defining relative clause. It narrows reference to the youth’s position.

5. “...he was reborn in the Tāvātimsa celestial world, where he enjoyed celestial glory.”

This is the relative adverbial clause (“where”), it provides spatial information about his new existence. The results of the syntactic analysis of relative clauses in “*The Dhammapada*” translated by Ven. Weragoda Sarada Maha Thero.

2. The Result of the Frequency of Relative Clauses occurred in the Pali Dhammapada texts found in the Buddhist Sutta Pitaka of Yamaka Vagga (Twin Verses).

The analysis of the 14 stories in the *Yamaka Vagga* section of the *Dhammapada Commentary* reveals that relative clauses are frequent syntactic structures used to provide description, specify identity, and connect narrative elements. They appear both as defining (restrictive) and non-defining (non-restrictive) clauses, typically introduced by *who*, *which*, *that*, and *where*. These clauses serve to: 1) Identify persons or objects (*the monks who were quarrelling*). 2) Add descriptive information (*the monk, who was blind*). 3) Specify places or circumstances (*the place where the two monks were sitting*).

Table 4. Frequency of Relative Clauses in Yamaka Vagga taken from 14 stories as follows:

Table 4. Frequency of Relative Clauses in Yamaka Vagga taken from 14 stories

Story No.	Title	Relative Clauses Identified	Examples	Frequency
1.	Monk Cakkhupāla	who, which, that	<i>the woman who had promised; the ointment which made her blind</i>	6
2.	Mattakundali	who, which	<i>the youth who saw the Buddha; the ornaments which he wore</i>	5
3.	Monk Tissa	who, where, that	<i>the ascetic who arrived first; the place where they slept</i>	7
4.	Kaliyakkhini	who, which	<i>the wife who was barren; the son who was handed over</i>	6
5.	Kosambi Monks	who, that	<i>the monks who were quarrelling; disciples that refused offerings</i>	5

6.	Monk Mahākāla	who, which, where, that	<i>the keeper who watched; the corpse which was burnt; the place where she lay</i>	8
7.	Devadatta (Robe story)	who, which, that	<i>the elephant-hunter who wore the robe; the robe which was unbecoming</i>	6
8.	Sāriputta & Moggallāna	who, which, whose	<i>the boy who was born in Upatissa village; the friend whose thought was the same</i>	7
9.	Monk Nanda	who, which, that	<i>the wife who called after him; the monkey which was burned; the nymphs that he saw</i>	7
10.	Cunda the Pork-Butcher	who, which, that	<i>the monks who thought he killed pigs; the torment which came</i>	5
11.	Dhammika Upāsaka	who, which, that	<i>the disciple who was virtuous; the chariot that hung suspended</i>	6
12.	Devadatta (Rebellion)	who, which, that	<i>the assassins who became disciples; the hatred which he bore</i>	6
13.	Sumanādevi	who, which, that	<i>the daughter who obtained the Second Path; the treasurer who mourned</i>	5
14.	Two Friends	who, which, where	<i>the monks who were friends; the Tipitaka which he acquired; the place where they sat</i>	7

The researcher has identified the relative clauses found in a total of 86 items from across 14 stories, as found in the most frequent form: *who* (for people) and *which* (for objects and abstract entities) and for less frequent but important forms: *where* (place), *that* (defining identification), and *whose* (possession). The number of relative clauses per story ranges between 5 and 8, showing consistency in narrative style.

The high and consistent frequency of relative clauses in the *Yamaka Vagga* is not accidental. It is justified by their functional importance in: 1) Identifying characters and actions, 2) Clarifying narrative details, 3) Emphasizing moral and doctrinal lessons, and 4) Maintaining a coherent and engaging storytelling style.

Thus, the presence of relative clauses is a central grammatical and rhetorical feature that supports both the literary richness and the didactic purpose of the *Dhammapada Commentary*.

In conclusion, the *Yamaka Vagga* demonstrates a rich and consistent use of relative clauses as a narrative strategy. They function to identify key figures, describe qualities, and

situate events in specific contexts, thereby linking moral lessons with vivid storytelling.

5. Conclusion and Discussion

This part presents the conclusion and discussion of the research findings based on the objectives mentioned above as follow:

1st Objective: Types and Forms of Relative Clauses

The analysis of the Yamaka Vagga section of the Dhammapada Commentary translated by Ven. Weragoda Sarada Maha Thero revealed that relative clauses are an essential syntactic and stylistic device in Buddhist narrative discourse. The study demonstrated that five main types and forms of relative clauses occur across the 14 stories examined, the textual analysis revealed that the Yamaka Vagga contains a wide variety of relative clause structures, which can be classified into five principal categories:

1. Relative pronoun as subject (e.g., “the woman who was barren”).
2. Relative pronoun as object (e.g., “the disciple whom the Buddha admonished”).
3. Relative pronoun as object of a preposition (e.g., “the house in which they lived”).
4. Possessive relative clause (e.g., “the man whose wife was virtuous”).
5. Adverbial relative clause of place or time (e.g., “the place where the Buddha resided”, “the time when he returned”).

In addition to these core forms, reduced relative clauses (participial constructions such as “the monks residing at the monastery”) also occurred frequently, reflecting the translator’s attempt to maintain narrative conciseness. Both restrictive (defining) and non-restrictive (non-defining) relative clauses were employed, with restrictive clauses being far more dominant. This pattern demonstrates that relative clauses were used mainly for specifying and identifying characters or events, while non-defining clauses were reserved for adding moral or descriptive elaboration.

Taken from the 14 stories, the researcher found that relative clauses consistently functioned as tools for identifying key figures (e.g., “the monks who were quarrelling” in the story of the Kosambi Monks). The elaborating moral character found (e.g., “the lay disciple who was virtuous and charitable” in the story of Dhammika Upāsaka). For the highlighting karmic consequences showed (e.g., “the butcher who did no works of merit” in the story of Cunda the Pork-Butcher). Lastly, for the connecting temporal and spatial details (e.g., “the place where the Buddha resided” in several stories).

Thus, the first objective confirms that the translator used relative clauses not only as grammatical devices but also as narrative strategies to convey clarity, emphasis, and doctrinal lessons.

2nd Objective: Frequency of Usage of Relative Clauses

The second objective was to measure the frequency and distribution of relative clauses across the Yamaka Vagga. A total of 86 relative clauses were identified across the 14 stories, yielding an average of 6–7 relative clauses per story. The range was relatively narrow, with the lowest being 5 clauses (The Story of Two Friends) and the highest being 8 clauses (The Story of Nanda and The Story of Cunda the Pork-Butcher).

When classified by form, the relative pronoun as subject emerged as the most frequent type, followed by relative pronoun as object, adverbial relative clauses, and finally possessive forms. The most frequent relative markers were:

who (most common, used for monks, lay disciples, and householders)

which (for events, objects, and abstract references)

that (restrictive use, often interchangeable with “who/which”)

where and when (adverbial use for places and times)

whose (least frequent, used in contexts of possession)

The balanced but steady distribution suggests that relative clauses were not employed randomly but followed a stylistic pattern consistent with oral narrative traditions. Each story makes use of relative clauses to maintain cohesion, prevent ambiguity, and attach ethical or doctrinal meaning to its characters.

Taken together, the two objectives highlight that relative clauses in the Yamaka Vagga serve a dual function: 1) *Linguistic Function*: They provide syntactic clarity, enabling smooth transitions between main clauses and subordinate elaborations. 2) *Narrative-Doctrinal Function*: They reinforce moral and doctrinal messages by attaching qualities, behaviors, and karmic consequences directly to individuals or events.

These findings align with the classification of relative clauses in English identified by Quirk (1985), where relative clauses fulfill both identifying and elaborative roles. They also resonate with Tipparach et al. (2021), who found that in CNN Business news, both restrictive and non-restrictive clauses were present, although non-restrictive clauses dominated at 61%. In contrast, in The Dhammapada, restrictive clauses occur more frequently, suggesting that religious and narrative texts rely more on specification and clarification than on descriptive elaboration.

Dharmawati and Mulyadi (2021) emphasized that relative clauses exist across languages with varied typologies, such as defining vs. non-defining in English and definite vs. indefinite in Arabic. Similarly, the present research confirms that Pali-English translations of Buddhist texts employ the same universal structures but within a cultural-religious frame. These findings also reflect Juliarta's (2022) analysis of relative clauses in *The Good Earth*, where restrictive clauses were predominant and often used to define characters or actions, similar to the narrative patterns in The Dhammapada.

The second objective was to identify the frequency of relative clause usage. The frequency analysis demonstrated that restrictive relative clauses occur significantly more often than non-restrictive ones in the Yamaka Vagga section. This reflects the narrative style of Buddhist texts, which emphasize clarity of character, doctrinal points, and situational specificity rather than extended elaboration. Restrictive clauses served to mark who performed certain actions, which event occurred, or what place was significant, thereby maintaining narrative precision and doctrinal accuracy.

This pattern differs from the findings of Tipparach et al. (2021), who reported a greater frequency of non-restrictive clauses in journalistic discourse. Such contrast demonstrates the influence of discourse type: narrative-religious texts prioritize identity and specification, while journalistic texts prioritize elaboration and clarification. Similarly, Rattanasak (2013) found that Thai learners experienced greater difficulty acquiring non-restrictive relative clauses, particularly center-embedded ones, suggesting that non-restrictive structures are inherently more complex. This may explain why The Dhammapada as a pedagogical-religious text relies more heavily on restrictive clauses to maintain clarity for its audience.

In terms of translation strategies, the findings echo those of Leenakitti and Pongpairoj (2019), who identified both literal translation with relativizers and translation adjustments in English-Thai contexts. In The Dhammapada, translation choices similarly balance fidelity to the source with clarity in the target language. Literal strategies preserve syntactic form, while adjustments ensure readability in English. The use of restrictive clauses reflects this tendency toward precision and doctrinal clarity.

In a translation-based study, Juliarta (2022) analyzed relative clauses in *The Good Earth* and their Indonesian translations. The research identified restrictive and non-restrictive relative clauses and examined translation strategies using Catford's (1965) translation shift theory. It

was found that restrictive clauses dominated and were translated through both structural parallels and shifts. This directly parallels the findings in *The Dhammapada*, where restrictive clauses are also frequent and often central to character identification and narrative coherence.

Finally, broader methodological reflections were offered by Tahamid Ar Rabbi and Kabir (2024), who clarified the role of literature review in applied linguistics. Although not directly focused on relative clauses, their emphasis on methodological rigor in reviewing related studies underpins the present work's approach to situating its findings within a wider academic context. Taken together, these related studies reveal three consistent themes: 1) Translation strategies show how relative clauses shift between structural fidelity and cultural adaptation (Leenakitti & Pongpaiboj, 2019; Juliarta, 2022). 2) Functional frequency studies indicate that relative clause usage differs across discourse domains, such as religious narrative, journalism, and pedagogy (Tipparach et al., 2021; Purnamasari, 2020). 3) Acquisition and comparative research highlight the challenges of relative clause use across languages and learner populations (Dharmawati & Mulyadi, 2021; Rattanasak, 2013).

By situating the analysis of "*The Dhammapada*" within this broader body of scholarship, it becomes evident that relative clauses serve as both a universal linguistic phenomenon and a culturally embedded narrative device.

6. New Body of Knowledge

This study advances core linguistics and literary analysis by demonstrating that relative clauses in the *Dhammapada* focusing on the Yamaka Vagga operate not only as grammatical devices but as core narrative strategies that shape meaning, guide reader attention, and foreground doctrinal lessons. In Buddhist narrative discourse, relative clauses systematically (i) identify participants and actions, (ii) clarify temporal-spatial settings, and (iii) attach moral or karmic attributes to protagonists, thereby enhancing cohesion and interpretability.

The research establishes a precise working typology for the text: (1) relative pronoun as subject, (2) relative pronoun as object, (3) relative pronoun as object of a preposition, (4) possessive relative clauses, (5) adverbial relatives (place/time), and (6) reduced (participial) relatives. Both restrictive and non-restrictive forms occur; however, restrictive relatives are markedly dominant, indicating a genre-specific preference for specification and identification over elaboration. This pattern contrasts with journalistic discourse, where non-restrictive relatives frequently predominate, and thereby situates Buddhist narrative syntax within a distinct functional profile.

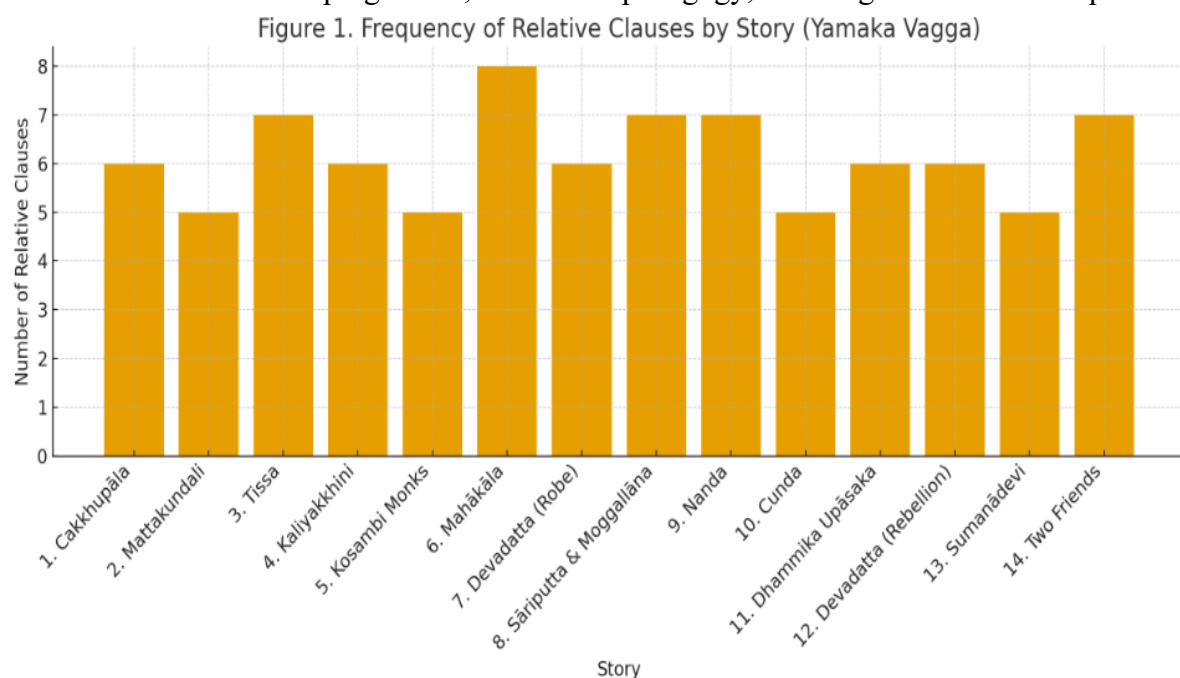
For the Frequency and stylistic design throughout across 14 Yamaka Vagga stories, 86 relative clauses were identified as 6–7 per story, revealing a stable distribution consistent with deliberate stylistic design rather than incidental variation (see Figure 1). The regularity with which relative clauses occur suggests their integral role in maintaining narrative precision while supporting didactic intent: e.g., *who* for agent identification, *which/that* for event or object specification, and *where/when* for scene anchoring.

Pedagogical implications. The analysis uncovers recurrent learner difficulties especially among Pali learners (monastics and lay students) in distinguishing functions of *who*, *which*, *that*, *whose*, and *where*. The findings recommend targeted instruction that differentiates (a) restrictive vs. non-restrictive usage, (b) full vs. reduced relatives, and (c) nominal vs. adverbial modification. Integrating authentic Buddhist narrative examples can directly improve translation accuracy and syntactic control in Pali English classrooms.

Comparative insight. By situating the results against cross-genre and cross-linguistic

literature, the study shows that the discourse domain strongly conditions relative-clause deployment. Religious narrative favors restrictive, identity-marking structures to preserve doctrinal clarity; other domains (e.g., journalism, modern prose) exploit non-restrictive relatives for elaboration. Thus, relative clauses emerge as a universal yet discourse-sensitive resource, whose functions are shaped by cultural-textual traditions and communicative goals.

The contribution of this research is twofold: (1) a text-grounded typology and frequency profile that exposes relative clauses as structural drivers of narrative clarity in Buddhist scripture, and (2) a set of pedagogical guidelines for teaching relative clauses using genre-authentic materials. Together, these extend relative-clause scholarship beyond description into the domains of narrative pragmatics, translation pedagogy, and religious textual interpretation.



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