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SİİRT ÜNİVERSİTESİ

AN OVERVIEW OF RELATIVE CLAUSE CONSTRUCTIONS MODIFYING NOUNS IN GAGAUZ SYNTAX

GAGAUZ SÖZ DİZİMİNDE İSMİ NİTELEYEN YAPILAR ÜZERİNE GENEL BİR BAKIŞ

ABSTRACT

Today the Gagauz language is spoken as a mother tongue mostly in Moldova and belongs to the Oghuz branch of Turkic languages. The general rule in Turkic languages is that the base component is placed at the end of a constituent or sentence. However, this rule is not always valid in the Gagauz syntax. In this respect, Gagauz language differs from other Turkic languages. It is thought that these structures have been borrowed from Slavic languages whose speakers have lived with the Gagauz for centuries.

Key Words

Gagauz language, participles, relative clause, head noun, relative pronoun

ÖZET

Bugün ağırlıklı olarak Moldova'da yaşayan Gagauzlar tarafından ana dili olarak kullanılan Gagauzca, Türkçenin Oğuz koluna mensuptur. Türkçenin söz diziminde temel unsur sonda, yardımcı unsur başta gelir kuralına aykırı söz dizimi yapıları sergileyen Gagauzca, bu yönüyle diğer Türk lehçelerinden ayrı bir yerde durmaktadır. Uzun asırlar Batı dilleri konuşucularının arasında yaşayan Gagauz Türklerinin bu yabancı söz dizimi yapılarını Slav dillerinden almış oldukları düşünülmektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler

Gagauzca, sıfat-fiil, ilgi cümlesi, baş ad (baş isim), bağlama zamiri

Introduction

In this paper I will describe the ways of constructing relative clauses in Gagauz. The basic purpose of this paper is to introduce the relative constructions in Gagauz in a comparative manner. But first, an introduction about the Gagauz language will be helpful in understanding the matter at hand.

About Gagauz

Gagauz is considered belonging to the Oghuz branch of Turkic languages which, besides Gagauz, includes Turkish, Azeri and Turkmen languages. Today Gagauz is one of the minority languages spoken in the Republic of Moldova, approximately by 200,000 speakers. Although this republic houses the biggest Gagauz population in the world, it is not the only country, beside it, Bulgaria, Ukraine and Romania are other major countries with Gagauz speakers.

Since 1994, the Gagauz people living in the Republic of Moldova have had their own autonomous territory which is called Gagauz Yeri or Gagauziya. After the autonomy the language has been one of the instruction languages, beside Moldovan and Russian, in schools in the autonomous region. There are limited publications in Gagauz, even though the amount of which has been in increase since the 1990's. The weekly newspapers *Ana Sözü* and *Gagauz Sesi* and a three-montly journal *Sabaa Yıldızı* are periodical publications in Gagauz language.

The relative construction in Gagauz is very different from those in the other Turkic languages since it employs post-nominal constructions as well as the pre-nominal ones.

What is a Relative Clause?

In a basic description, the relative clause construction is one of the means used by language to modify nouns. Of course in doing so, languages use different syntactic constructions, basicly two main ones; postnominal and prenominal relative clauses depending on whether the relative clauses (from now on RC) precedes or follows the head noun. The noun which is being modified by the RC is 'head noun'. Let us observe the following examples:

1) *kontsert*   *ver-än*   *uşak-lar* (AnaS N8 354)
    concert   give-part   boy-pl
    'boys who perform/performing a concert'

Here the relative clause *kontsert verän* preceeds the head noun *uşaklar*, an apparent prenominal construction. In its English equivalent or translation we find a postnominal relative construction; *boys who perform a concert*, the head noun *boys* preceeding the RC.

2) *bu*   *çık-êr*   *kırk*   *dolar-a*   *yakın*   *ay-da*   *onnar-a*   *kim*
    this   cost-aor(3s) forty   dollar-dat   close   month-loc   those-dat   who

    iş-tä   *bulun-êr* (AnaS N2 345)
    work-loc   be present-aor(3s)

    'This approximately costs forty dollars a month for those who have a job'

Here the head noun *onnara* is followed by the relative construction *kim iştä bulunêr*, setting an example for a postnominal RC construction.

Three types of syntactic and semantic operations are related to the RC construction a) attribution, b) subordination and nominalization, c) gap-formation (Haig 1998:16). In its attribution character the RC gives or adds information about the head noun. Subordination reflects a degrading change in the

status of proposition expressed by RC, namely from an independent to a dependent one. If this subordinated clause fills an argument position in the main clause then it is called nominalization. Gap-formation indicates an unfilled slot in the structure of RC.

Relative Clauses in Turkish

The reason that I give a short review of the relative construction in Turkish is based on two facts: a) Turkish is the language most closely related to Gagauz, b) this subject is a relatively well studied topic in Turkish compared to Gagauz.

Turkish uses prenominal relative constructions built with participle suffixes. Acccording to Underhill (1972) Turkish uses the *-An* type participle suffix where the target of relativization is subject or part of a subject in the underlying sentence. Observe the following relative clause in Turkish:

3) *[Ø_i*   *kitap*   *oku-yan]*   *çocuk_i*
    empty-subj   book   read-part   boy

    'the boy who reads (a) book(s)'

This relative clause is derived from the underlying sentence:

4) *çocuk*   *kitap*   *oku-r*
    boy   book   read-aor-(3s)

    'The boy reads (a) book(s)'

If the target of relativization is a non-subject or part of a non-subject then a *-DIk* type of participle is used with a possesive suffix attached to it and the subject of the relative clause receiving a genitive case suffix.

5) *[çocuğ-un*   *Ø_i*   *oku-duğ-u]*   *kitap_i*
    boy-gen   empty-obj   read-part-poss3s   book

    'the book that the boy reads'

Underhill names the former type subject participles and the latter type object participles.

The studies treating Turkish relative clauses are united in pointing out some postnominal constructions with the complemetizer *ki* as loan syntax, in examples such as following:

6) *Ben*   *ki*   *bu*   *iş-ler-in*   *uzman-ı-yım* (taken from Haig 1998:124)
    I   comp   this   matter-pl-gen   expert-poss3s-1s

    'I, who am an expert in these matters'

Relative constructions in Gagauz

As seen so far, Gagauz has more options than any other Turkic language in constructing RC's. It has participle suffixes as the majority of Turkic languages does, and in addition complemetizers to form finite sentences just like in Indo-European languages. Those sentences built with complementizers either modify an argument of the main clause or take place as a subordination to the matrix sentence. As stated before, RC's with participles are prenominal while those with complementizers are postnominal. Let us look at this constructions more closely, first RC's with participle suffixes.

Pre-nominal constructions in Gagauz

In Gagauz, participles are verbal nominals that are used to modify nouns. Following Haig (1998:38) for what he did in his examining of Turkish participles, we can classify the Gagauz participles in two groups; a) possessed participles which target the non-subject element of the underlying sentence, in a construction in which the subject, if present, is marked with the genitive as in the following example:

10)   *Gagauz-lar-ın*   *yaşa-dı-ı*   *ülke* (AnaS N19 365)

       Gagauz-pl-gen   live-part-poss3s   country

       'the country where the Gagauz live'

b) free participles which are non-possessed, target the subject of sentence as in the following example:

1)   *kontsert*   *ver-än*   *uşak-lar* (AnaS N8 354)

       concert   give-part   boy-pl

       'boys who perform/performing a concert'

In Gagauz the suffixes for free participles are: *-(y)An, -mIş, -(y)AcAk, -Ar, -mAz*. The possessed participle suffixes are: *-DIk (> -DI), -(y)AcAk (> -(y)AcA)*.
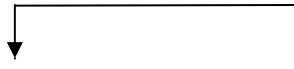
Post-nominal constructions in Gagauz

In this type of relative clauses Gagauz employs the complementizers most of which are at the same time used as question particles. This clauses are set off from the prenominal participle nominalizations in two major ways: first they contain a tensed non-nominalized finite verb; second they are not necessarily embedded in a noun phrase containing their head but rather, they are conjoined with the matrix clause as a whole. The question words in these subordinated clauses occupy complementizer position. Since they have the same properties as nouns, they may take case suffixes as well.

Question words of Gagauz

Gagauz has the following question words: *ne* 'what', *nerä* 'where', *neredä* 'where', *neredän* 'from where', *nereyä* 'where', *angısı* 'which', *kim* 'who', *nasıl* 'how'. The question words occur in direct or indirect questions. Beside that in the relative clauses these question words may introduce subjects, objects or nouns in genitive or oblique cases. In relative clause construction the question words are used to connect the head noun and the modifying clause. In that usage they, i.e., question words, carry the morphological case suffixes with which the head nouns would have shown up in deep structure in the modifying clauses. Let us look at the examples below where to be more clear we display the relative clause construction and other clauses in bracketed phrases and also movements in arrows.

Subject:

11)   [*O-nu*   *say-êr-lar*   [*hepsi*ᵢ   [*kim*ᵢ   [___ᵢ   *savaş-êr*

       s/he-acc   respect-aor-3pl   all   who   fight-aor(3s)

       karşı   *koy-ma-a*   *rak*   *hastalı-ı-na*]]]] (AnaS N11 357)

       against   put-inf-dat   cancer   sickness-poss 3s-dat

'S/he is respected by all who fights against cancer'

Object:

12) [*Biz-im*   *yan-ımız-da*   *bulun-ıy*
     we-gen   side-poss1pl-loc   be present-prog(3s)

   [*papaz*ᵢ [*angısı-nı*ᵢ   [*biz*   *ilaçla-dı-ydı-k* ___ᵢ   *biz-im*   *küü-müz-de*]]]]
   priest   who-acc   we   cure-past-past-1pl   we-gen   village-poss1pl-loc
   (Ulutaş 2000)
   'The priest whom we had cured in our village is with us'

Genitive:

13)   *Moda*   *gösteri-sin-dä*   [*büük*   *bir grup maniken*ᵢ   *payal-dı,*[*angı-lar-ın*ᵢ   [___ᵢ
      fashion show-poss3s-loc big   a group model   participate-past(3s) whose-pl- gen

      çok   *gözäl*   *elbise-leri*]]]   *çoy-u*   *eski-ler-dän*   *dik-il-miş-lär* (AnaS N2 345)
      very   nice   dress-poss3pl   most-poss3s used-pl-abl   make-pass-past-3pl

      'Many models whose very nice dresses have been made up from used fabrics participated in the fashion show'

Locative:

14)   [*Beşalma-da*   *Dimitri Karaçoban-ın*   *ad-ın-ı*   *muzey*ᵢ   *taşı-yêr*   [*neredä*ᵢ [*o* ___ᵢ
      Beşalma-loc   D. Karaçoban-gen   name-poss3s-acc museum carry-aor(3s)   where   he

      yıl-lar-lan   *çalış-tı*]]] (AnaS N9 355)
      year-pl-instr   work-past(3s)

      'In Beşalma the museum where he worked many years carries the name of Dimitri Karaçoban'

Ablative:

15)   *Ver-miş*   [*bir*   *versiya*ᵢ   [*neredän*ᵢ   [*etnonim*   *Gagauz*___ᵢ
      give-past(3s)   a   version   where   etynom   Gagauz

      çekil-êr]]] (AnaS N7 353)
      come-aor(3s)

      'S/he had given a version of where the etynom Gagauz comes from'

Dative:

16)   [*Akmola* *şehir-in*ᵢ *eski ad-ı*   [*nereyä*ᵢ *geç-ti*   *Kazahstan-ın baş kasaba-sı* ___ ᵢ]]]
      Akmola   city-gen   old name-poss3s   where   move-past(3s) Kazakhstan main   city-poss3s

      eni   *ad-ı*   *Astana*   *ol-sun* (AnaS N11 357)
      new   name-poss3s   Astana   become-opt(3s)

      'The new name of the city of Akmola where the capital city of Kazakhstan has moved to will become Astana'

What we see in the examples above is a statement by the relative clause about a specific noun phrase of the matrix clause. Note that the verbs of RC's are all finite, and the RC's modify an argument of the matrix sentence. In Gagauz complementizers can also construct finite sentences but not with the aim of modifying any argument of the matrix. When I use the term 'argument' I mean subject, object or an oblique argument, in other words I do not include the adverbial or subordinate clauses. This type of complex clauses might be better examined under the title of adverbial clause in another study. Therefore I have left them out of the scope of the current article.

Having seen the construction of relative clauses in Gagauz the question to be asked makes itself clear: why does Gagauz use structures fundamentelly different from most of the other Turkic languages? To answer this question we should take a good look at the surrounding neighboring languages of Gagauz. Gagauz is a Turkic language that has been spoken for centuries in a non-Turkic environment, surrounded by Indo-European languages Moldovian, Bulgarian and Russian. This fact may pose a good explanation for the deviation from the Turkic pattern. Gagauz picked up the Indo-European system of constructing relative clauses while at the same time preserving the Turkic one. This correlates with the word order of Gagauz which also displays a deviant character from its Turkic origin. We find a common SVO word order in Gagauz as opposed to a SOV order in other Turkic languages. This different word order pattern in Gagauz can be seen in the following example:

17) *Gagauziya-da   var   52   şkola,   32   buçuk bin   üürenici,   84*
Gagauziya-loc   exist   52   school 32   half   thousand   student   84

uşak başçesi (AnaS N2 345)
kindergarten

'In Gagauziya exist 52 schools, 32 and a half thousand students and 84 kindergartens'

However to connect the phenomenon of post-nominal relative construction of Gagauz to only foreign influence would be an easy answer without looking deeply into Turkic languages' syntactic structures. Just to cite the following examples from Turkish may be a warning against choosing the easy answer.

18) *Ne   ek-er-se-n   o-nu   biç-er-sin* (Turkish proverb)
what   plant-aor-cond-2s   it-acc   harvest-aor-2s

'You harvest what you plant'

The first part *ne ekersen* is a finite clause and functions as object of the second sentence *onu biçersin*. We may express the proposition which is declared in *ne ekersen* in a prenominal participle relative construction as *ektiğini* in *ektiğini biçersin*.

Conclusion

Gagauz has a unique relative clause construction system which employs participles in prenominal RC's and a variety of complementizers in postnominal RC's. It's participle usage in this type constructions is very similar to Turkish pattern and in some degree to that of other Turkic languages. What makes it different from most of the other Turkic languages is its postnominal RC construction. In postnominal constructions Gagauz uses finite verbs and a complete sentence structure which may function as modifier to any arguments of the matrix clause. Although this construction type seems to

be explainable with language-contact phenomena at first sight, it deserves more attention to explore the problem in full.

List of Abbreviations

AnaS: Ana Sözü, weekly newspaper in Gagauz (text source)

abil.: ability; abl.: ablative case; acc.: accusative case; adv.: adverbial; aor.: aorist; cond.: conditional

conj.: conjunction; dat.: dative case; (e): empty; empt-obj.; empty object; empt-subj.: empty subject; 1pl.: first person plural suffix; 1s.: first person singular suffix; gen.: genitive case; i:co- indexed; inf.: infinitive; inst.: instrumental case; loc.: locative case; neg.: negation; NP: noun phrase; opt.: optative; part.: participle suffix; pass.: passive suffix; past.: past tense suffix; pl.: plural suffix; poss1s.: possessive first person singular suffix; poss1pl.: possessive first person plural suffix; poss3s.: possessive third person singular suffix; poss3pl.: possesive third person plurar suffix; prog.: progressive; quest.: question particle; 2s.: second person singular suffix; (3s): unmarked third person singular suffix.

Note: Examples of which sources are not indicated are mine.

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