

The Cappadocian relative clause: regional diversification in a typological patchwork

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This paper examines a case of contact-induced language change in Cappadocian Greek (CG), a critically endangered Greek dialect and contact variety, spoken in Cappadocia (Turkey) until 1923-24 (Janse 2020: 47-8; Thomason & Kaufman 1988: 215-22), namely the CG relative clause (RC). This construction shows, among other things, clear Turkish influence in its word order, as can be seen in the following examples:

(1) CG	<i>tu=puliδj-ú</i>	<i>t=óima</i>	<i>t=áxsen</i>	<i>don=dópo</i>
	the=bird-GEN	the=blood	REL=fall.PFV.PST.3SG	the=place
(2) Tr.	<i>kuş-un</i>	<i>kan-i-nın</i>	<i>düş-tüğ-ü</i>	<i>yer-de</i>
	bird-GEN	blood-POSS.3SG-GEN	fall-PTCP-POSS.3SG	place-LOC
(3) ModGr.	<i>s-ton=dópo</i>	<i>pu</i>	<i>épese</i>	<i>to=éma</i>
	on-the=place	REL	fall.PFV.PST.3SG	the=blood
				<i>tu=puli-ú</i>
				the=bird-GEN

‘in the place where the bird’s blood fell’ (Dawkins 1916: 312)

Though briefly addressed by Janse (1999) and mentioned within a broader analysis of relativizers in Modern Greek dialects (Liosis & Kriki 2013), a comprehensive study of the CG RC, with emphasis on Turkish influence, is still absent from current scholarship. Therefore, this paper provides an in-depth analysis of the CG RC, addressing this construction as an example of pattern replication (PAT; Matras 2020: 257-64) from the Turkish RC. This process resulted in a hybrid composition of, on the one hand, features that remained Greek (e.g., the use of a relativizer and a finite verb), and, on the other hand, elements that were replicated from Turkish (e.g., the possibility to have the relative clause in prenominal position). This construction corresponds to what Keskin (2023) calls “X-clauses”, i.e., clauses consisting of a mixture of features of a Turkic and an Indo-European model, resulting in a patchwork of different clause types.

Focusing on variation in the CG RC, the objectives of the present study are twofold. First, this paper will investigate what PAT precisely entails in this case, taking into account a third category of features that may exhibit either a Greek or a Turkish version, and “oscillate” (Keskin 2023: 175-6) between these two versions. For example, many tokens show a prenominal RC (cf. Turkish), whereas the RC follows the head noun (cf. Greek) in another part of the tokens. Second, this paper will also analyse diatopic variation in this construction, as CG consists of multiple subdialects, which show notable regional diversification regarding their Turkish influence.

This paper addresses these research objectives by analysing a corpus including the transcriptions of 58 orally transmitted folktales (ca. 50,000 words) in 11 CG subdialects. In doing so, the present study contributes to the understanding and description of understudied, though frequent syntactic features in the underdocumented and severely endangered CG dialect.

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