

Subject Licensing in  
Agr-(less) Relative Clauses in Turkic  
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Within the assumptions of the Minimalist Program (MP), Case morphology on NPs/DPs is accounted for by an Agree relation that holds between a functional category (FC) and the relevant constituent (Chomsky 1995, 2000). Recent research in the syntactic properties of functional categories has further revealed that languages can vary with respect to the status they ascribe to Agreement in syntax (cf. George and Kornfilt, 1981). This paper investigates the nature of licensing conditions on case marking properties of subjects in relative clauses in three Turkic languages, Turkish, Kazakh and Kirghiz, within the premises and assumptions of the MP. The paper basically argues that projection of *AgrP* is subject to parametric variation in Turkic languages, at least in relative clauses. Subject licensing in the absence of an immediate licensing category is carried out by means of long distance Agree with the immediately dominating functional category, vP or IP/TP.

Case licensing of embedded subjects in Turkish, Kazakh and Kirghiz exhibit similar properties. In all three languages, subjects of complement clauses bear an overt Genitive marker and the embedded verb is marked with the *Agr* element.

- (1)a. (Ben) siz-in yarın Kırgızistan-a gid-eceğ-iniz-i duy-du-m. Turkish  
I youPL-Gen tomorrow -DAT go-NOM-2PLPOSS-ACC hear-PAST-1SG  
'I heard that you are going to Kirghizistan tomorrow.'
- b. (Men) siz-gi Kırgızistan-dan kel-gen-iz-di esti-di-m. Kazakh  
I youPL-GEN -ABL come-NOM-2PLPOSS-ACC hear-PAST-1SG  
'I heard that you are coming from Kirghizistan.'
- c. (Men) siz-din Kırgızistan-dan kel-gen-iniz-di uk-tu-m. Kirghiz  
I youPL-GEN -ABL come-NOM-2PLPOSS-ACC hear-PAST-1SG  
'I heard that you are coming from Kirghizistan.'

Subjects of adjunct clauses, on the other, are marked NOM in Turkish although the embedded verb is marked with the nominal agreement morphology.

- (2)a. Ben Kırgızistan-dan Türkiye-ye gel-diğ-im zaman, aile-m  
I -ABL -DAT come-NOM-1SGPOSS time, family-1SGPOSS  
  
ben-i telefon-la ara-dı.  
I-ACC phone-INST call-PAST  
'When I came to Turkey from K., my family called me on the phone.'

In a recent study, Kornfilt (to appear) proposes that *Agr* in Turkish is an expression not only of phi-features but also of categorial features [ $\pm N$ ,  $\pm V$ ], accounting for the split nature of the case licensing properties of Turkish complement and adjunct clauses by the intrinsic categorial properties of *Agr*-. In adjunct clauses, the categorial features of *Agr*- are [ $+N$ ,  $+V$ ]. Nominative case feature on the embedded subject is thus licensed by the verbal nature of *Agr* .

The same principle can account for the subject case licensing in Turkish relative clauses. In the non-subject *-DIK* relativization constructions in Turkish, the subject of the embedded clause is marked with the GENITIVE marker and the embedded verb with Agreement (Underhill 1972, Poole 1992, Özsoy 1997).

- (3) Ben-im dün yol-da gör-düğ-üm kişi çok şişman-dı.  
I-1GEN yesterday road.LOC see-PART-1SG person very fat-PAST  
'The person I saw on the road yesterday was very heavy.'

Similarly, relative clauses in Kazakh exhibit behavior parallel to Turkish relative clauses with respect to Case marking of their subjects and agreement on the embedded verb.

- (4) Keshe jol-da biz-din kör-gen-imiz kişi öte semiz balatın.  
Yesterday road-LOC we-GEN see-NOM-1PLPOSS man very fat AUX.  
'The man we saw on the road yesterday was very fat.'

In Kirghiz relativization too case marking of subjects in non-subject relative clauses behaves in a similar manner- they are marked with the Genitive. What is interesting in Kirghiz, however, is that the *Agr* morphology is marked not on the embedded predicate as in the case of the other two languages but on the head noun.

- (5) Keçe күnü col-da men-in kör-gön kişi-m abdan semiz ele.  
Last day road-LOC I-GEN see-PART man-1POSS very fat AUX  
'The man I saw on the road yesterday was very fat.'

The derivation of constructions such as (5) is accounted for by the head-raising derivation of relative clauses as proposed by Kayne (1999) and assumed for such relativization constructions in Turkic by Kornfilt (1999).

What is significant in Kirghiz relativization is that constructions with no overt *Agr* morphology are also licensed.

- (6) Keçe күnü col-da men kör-gön kişi abdan semiz ele.  
Last day road-LOC I-NOM see-PART man- very fat AUX  
'The man I saw on the road yesterday was very fat.'

As (6) illustrates, the subject *men* 'I' does not bear an overt case marking. There is also no *Agr*-morphology on the head noun (or the embedded verb, for that matter).

The paper will argue that constructions such as (6) in Kirghiz lack an *Agr*-projection within the NP/DP the relative clause is located. The subject of the embedded clause is licensed by the *Agr*-feature of the closest category, vP or IP (TP), with which the head NP/DP has an Agree relation. The categorial nature of both of these projections being [-N,+V], they license the default case on the embedded subject, i.e. Nominative, which intrinsically is verbal agreement morphology.

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