On Word Order Differences Between Turkish And Karaim

Éva Ágnes Csató
University of Oslo-Mainz

Comparing the syntax of different Turkic languages or the syntax of one and the same language in different historical periods might lead to findings of theoretical importance. The Turkic syntax known to us from written sources of different periods displays an unusually high degree of stability. Many of the basic typological features of Old Turkic syntax as manifested in inscriptions (in so-called Runic script) are also characteristic of modern Turkic. Though they are spread over a huge geographical area, the Turkic languages spoken today also show a relatively high degree of syntactic similarity. In view of these facts, a rewarding object of research would seem to be the notion of a 'Turkic syntactic type', characterized in positive and negative terms, i.e. as sets of typical and non-typical features.

Even if the notion of syntactic type is theory-dependent, it is commonly admitted that a pure listing of features does not suffice for establishing a type. The notion of type gains in theoretical interest when it requires that features characterizing one type show a relatively high frequency of co-occurrence cross-linguistically and manifest implicational relations. Georg von der Gabelentz, in his programmatic article on language typology published in 1894, *Hypologie der Sprachen, eine neue Aufgabe der Linguistik*, formulated the idea of implicational universals as follows: "die Erscheinung A tritt mit so und so größer Wahrscheinlichkeit mit B, C, D usw. zusammen, selten mit E, nicht mit F" (The phenomenon A correlates with such and such a great probability with the phenomena B, C, D, etc., seldom with E, not with F). Accordingly, a syntactic type can be defined as a bundle of features which necessarily co-occur in a language.

This way of thinking has ever since Gabelentz been a leading idea of typology, just as much in Greenberg's word order typology as in Chomsky's
generative theory of parameters and principles, to name just two well-known examples.

From the idea that certain features necessarily imply each other follows that a change in one such feature should imply changes in other properties. A comparison of different Turkic languages that show typological similarities but nevertheless manifest different sets of syntactic features may provide us with interesting evidence of such relatedness phenomena.

An interesting case is Karaim, a Kipchak language spoken today (in Lithuania and Poland) by a very small number of native speakers. To illustrate some basic properties of its syntax, we shall quote some sentences from a work of Alexander Mardkowicz, a Polish Karaim, who published some texts in a special Latin script. The text chosen is a tale called Eligahunun ucuro, 'Elijah's adventure'.

   'My young and beloved friend'

2. Tutasen kolunda burunhu jomakny, kajsy cykry karaj sezinde.
   'You hold in your hand the first tale which has appeared in the Karaim language,'

The first two sentences illustrate some syntactic traits characteristic of Karaim. In the first phrase, Jigit ta siber dostum, we find an attributed aorist participle siber which is used in the Turkic way, i.e., it precedes the head-noun dostum. The fact that the participle is an active form and not passive, although it should be interpreted 'beloved' and not 'loving', is also a regular characteristic of such constructions, which can be observed in different Turkic languages (e.g., okuyacak kitap). See for a discussion Csató 1990 and the literature cited here.
The second expression in the Karaaim example 2. contains a relative clause which is introduced by a relative pronoun developed of a genuine Turkic pronoun and the 3.possessive suffix. The relative clause in example 2 contains a finite verb *cyky.* The word order in this example is also interesting since the main finite verb, *tutasen,* is in initial and not final position as usual in Turkish. A postpositive relative clause containing a relative pronoun follows immediately the head noun, in this example *burunhula jomakly.*

A relative clause of this type might be embedded in a clause, as in example 3

3 Bir kinni kieldi kachrasyna ol altyncynyn, kajsynda Elijahu jiweniretd', jat kartadam, andij urunsahally ta itikierili. a day:acc come:pass shop:3 poss:dat that goldsmith:gen, which:3,poss:loc Elijahu learn:aorist:pass copula:3 foreign old man such long-bearded and sharp-eyed

One day a foreign old man with such a long beard and sharp eyes, came to the goldsmith's shop in which Elijahu was an apprentice.

The properties of case-marking are typologically interesting. In Turkish, a non-specific object which precedes the verb is in the nominative (bir *kitap aldim*).

However, when the object is separated from the verb, it must be in the accusative irrespective of specificity. In Karaaim, the accusative case-marking seems to be dependent exclusively on the referential properties of the object constituent. The position of the object with respect to the verb does not seem to play any role. In sentence 4, the object, *jat tilde jazgan jomaklar,* follows the verb and is in the nominative. In example 5, the definite object, *ol sewutnu* 'the vessel', is in the accusative and the indefinite one, *nece kistem bahyr* 'many pieces of copper', in the nominative.

4 Bu zamanladein sen uchudun ancak jat tilde jazgan jomaklar. this time:dat [converbial postposition] until you read:past:2 only foreign language:loc write:gen-participle taliplur. 'Until this time you have read only tales which were written in foreign languages.'


'When Elijahu brought that vessel, the Persian placed it on the fire and threw many pieces of copper into it.'

6 Anyin cin bolaldyn sahylama, ki bizin tilimiz andij miskin ta tigiedwtil, ki jetmej ci anyn chalyyn jomakkada.

that:Gen:[Postposition] for can:Past:2 think:Infinitive, that ki We:Gen language:1.Plur.Poss. such poor and full:negation that ki

suffice:negation:Present:Dir it:Gen Strength:3.Poss:Old instr tal:Dat[Particle] also

Therefore you could think that our language is so poor and imperfect that with its strength it does not even suffice for tales.'

The verb bolaldyn 'you could' is used as an auxiliary verb which is construed with the infinitive of the main verb, sahylama 'think, believe'. Note the word order: the auxiliary precedes the main verb in Karaim. The normal order in Turkish is the opposite (söylenip durdu 'he kept grumbling').

The complement clause in example 6 is a clause introduced by ki. Apparently similar clauses preceded by ki or kim have been used in certain Turkic languages for a very long time. Their use was surely influenced by foreign patterns which does not necessarily mean that their syntax is analogous to these patterns. In modern Turkish, ki- clauses are juxtaposed to the preceding clause and not syntactically subordinated (see the arguments in Johanson 1975).

The second ki- clause is introduced in the preceding clause by a demonstrative pro-adverb andij 'such'. This is also very frequent, for example, in Chagatai, as an example from the Babur-name illustrates:

7 Chagatai

Mir Sah Qucinî andîq çaptîlar kim boyînîn yarînyä yavgî çepîlîp âdi.


'They beat Mir Sah Qucin so much that his neck was nearly half cut.'

(Babur-name 40b)
Several *ki ikim-* clauses may follow each other both in the Chagatay language of the Babur-name and in Karaîm, as our example 6 illustrates. What is the syntactic relation between these clauses? An important point has to be considered when studying the syntax of such constructions. The possibility of translating the first *ki-* clause as an object-complement and the second as an adverbial complement does not *per se* mean that the clauses are syntactically subordinated. Syntax and semantic interpretation should be kept apart. Thus, *ki ikim-* constructions might have rather different syntactic characteristics in different Turkic languages, a fact that has often been ignored in discussions on Indo-European types of subordination in Turkic. One interesting question is why *ki-* constructions have gained acceptance in several Turkic languages. Is it possible that they are used in a way that corresponds to genuine Turkic constructions? (See also Johanson 1992; 1993).

An important feature of *ki-* clauses in Karaîm is that the choice of the verb-form in the complement clause may be influenced by the predicate of the preceding clause. The verb *kolma* 'beg' requires that the verb in the complement clause, *cyharhaj*, be in the optative.

8 Sondra başladi Eliahu kolma Terrini kim cyharhaj any bu zyndandam. 
laterbegin:forlist:past copula:3 Eliahu beg:infinitive God:acc that kim bring optative he:acc this prison:abl
'Then Eliahu began to beg God to bring him out of this prison.'

This can be easily accounted for, if we assume that the *kim-* clause is a subordinated complement clause just as well as a participle or infinitive clause in Turkish is. For arguments, see Csató 1991. Subordinated clauses, such as the Karaîm one in example 8, are usual, among others, in varieties of Balkan Turkish.

The order of the genitive noun and the possessive noun in possessive constructions is free in case both members are marked, i.e., the possessor is in the genitive and the possessed bears a possessive suffix. See in example 10, *karaj kilînîn chaly* 'the strength of the Karaîm language'; in example 11 *bizim sezîmizbe*
'with our language': in example 12 senin koluna 'into your hand'; juwukluhun jazbasyn 'the nearness of the spring'; balkuwun kujasyn 'the shine of the sun'; jeallihin tizlerem 'the greenness of the fields'; ciecieklerin bachcalarnyn 'the flowers of the gardens'.

10 Karaj kilinin chaly jeten osolajze undij jazerlata.
'The strength of the Karaim language suffices just as well for such writings.'

11 Into biz. Karajlar, azbiz da jochi bizde kimhe jazma bizin sezimizhe.
only we, Karaim:plur few:1.plur and there isn't we:loc somebody:dat write:infinite we:gen language:1.plur, poss:instr
'However, we Karaims are few and there is nobody among us to write for in our language.'

12 Bolalhaj bu jazycky, kajsyn men kojamen senin koluna, bolma ol burunhu cyppcyk, kajsy anlatad juwukluhun jazbasyn ta kielired 'ezihe balkuwun kujasyn, jeallihin tizlerem ta ciecieklerin bachcalarnyn.
'Let this little writing which I put into your hand, be able to become the first bird which tells about the nearness of spring and which brings with itself the sunshine, the greenness of the fields and the flowers of the gardens.'

In Turkish, the normal word order in possessive constructions is the one in which the 'possessor' precedes the 'possessed'. When the possessor is in the genitive and the possessed is marked with a possessive suffix, other orderings are also possible (see Tietze 1958). In Karaim, both orderings are possible, as illustrated by karaj kilinin chaly 'the strength of the Karaim language' and ciecieklerin bachcalarnyn 'the flowers of the gardens'. It seems to me that in case the possessor is not a pronoun, the neutral order in Karaim is Nposs + Ngen. The order Ngen + Nposs is often used to put more emphasis on the possessor, as in sentence 10, where the expression karaj kilinin bears a specific communicative emphasis.

Assuming that the order Nposs + Ngen is a basic one, the two nouns in this order function as one syntactic unit, one phrase. This is also supported by the fact
that a relative clause which takes the first noun as head can follow this phrase, as in
3, kachraşyn a ol altyncynım, kajsynda Eliahu jiwrëätig 'to the workshop of the
goldsmith, in which Elijahu was an apprentice'. In Turkish, a postpositive Ngen
does not function together with the Nposs as a phrase.

In example 13, the postpositive position of the pronominal possessor makes
it possible to contrast tirlihim 'my life' and dzany m 'my soul'. The neutral
position of pronominal possessors seems to be the one in front of the head noun.

13 Elijahu karuw berdi karakcyha; – Tirlihim menim zênin kolunda, wałe
dzany m menim kajyrm menim Terîme.
Elijahu answer give:past:3 magician:dat: – life:1.poss 1.gen you:gen
'Elijahu answered the magician: – My life is in your hands, but my soul will
return to my God.'

The following table summarizes some word order differences between Turkish
and Karaim (For other features, see, e.g., Pritsak 1959).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WO-property</th>
<th>Turkish</th>
<th>Karaim</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>verb and object</td>
<td>O+V</td>
<td>V+O</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lexical verb and auxiliary verb</td>
<td>lexV+auxV</td>
<td>auxV+lexV</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>relative clause and head noun</td>
<td>S 3rd N</td>
<td>N S 3rd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>possessive constructions</td>
<td>N gen N poss</td>
<td>N poss N gen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>attributed adjective and noun</td>
<td>Adj N</td>
<td>Adj N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>adposition and noun</td>
<td>N postposition</td>
<td>N postposition (Preposition N)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

With respect to word order properties, Turkish and Karaim represent basically
different syntactic types. The main difference with regard to determinant and
determined categories is that, in Turkish, the determinant tend to precede the
determined, whereas in Karaim, the opposite order is dominant. Our observations seem to point to the validity of some implicational word order universals as defined by Greenberg. Further research will confirm and modify the conclusions tentatively formulated in this paper. It will define differences and similarities in a typologically more elaborated way and also show to what extent Karaim may have retained characteristics of a possible 'Turkic syntactic type'.

REFERENCES


Mardkowicz, Aleksander, 1930, Eljahhunun Uceru, Luck. (Also in: Johannes Benzing, Arbeitsmaterialen aus dem Seminar für Orientkunde der Universität Mainz, Nr.4).

