

Contact-Induced Language Change in Azerbaijani Relative Clauses

Azerbaijani is a language belonging to the Oghuz branch of Turkic languages. Like most Turkic languages, Azerbaijani allows pre-nominal and postposed (extraposed) relative clauses. The primary type of RCs in Azerbaijani are pre-nominal RCs, which are participial constructions in which the verb of the RC appears in a non-finite form (Solak 2019; Authier 2012; Csató and Uchurpani 2010; Hankamer and Knecht 1976; Underhill 1972). These participial RCs precede the head noun; they are formed by attaching a participle suffix which functions as a relativizing suffix to the verb stem. These relativizing participle suffixes thus correspond to relative pronouns in languages such as English. Pre-nominal participle RCs in Azerbaijani are formed using participle suffixes *-(y)an* and *-diq* attached to the verb stems preceding the head nouns. Although native speakers of Azerbaijani still make widespread use of pre-modifying participle RCs, new type of RCs has been observed in their spoken discourse: post-nominal finite RCs with “*ki*” (*Ki* is the invariant relative marker which is equivalent to *who*, *which*, or *that* in English and is assumed to have been borrowed from Persian, in which relative clauses are marked by an invariant relative marker *Ke*). This type of RC has emerged as a result of extensive language contact with Persian, the socially dominant language of the country. This talk provides a detailed description of the syntactic structure of RC types in Azerbaijani, and explores the extent to which language contact has shaped these structures.