

Correlative clauses in Gawarbatī (Indo-Aryan): multifunctionality and possible evolution

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The Indo-Aryan languages are often cited as an example of a group of languages which extensively use correlative relativization (e.g., Bhatt 2003: 491; Lipták 2009: 11-12), i.e. a type of relativization where “a left-peripheral relative clause is linked to a <...> nominal correlate in the clause that follows the relative clause” (Lipták 2009: 2). However, the structural diversity of Indo-Aryan correlatives remains to be further explored. In particular, the Indo-Aryan languages of the Hindu Kush (HKIA or “Dardic” languages) display a number of relativization strategies which are quite different from the widely discussed Hindi/Urdu correlative construction, but have only been fragmentarily described. This paper presents a corpus-based study of correlative clauses in Gawarbatī, an HKIA language spoken in the Pakistan-Afghanistan border area. The results of the study have implications both for the analysis of similar constructions in related languages and for the typology of correlatives in general.

Correlative clauses in Gawarbatī are illustrated in (1)-(2). Both examples show that, similarly to other HKIA, the obligatory pronoun modifying the head NP in the correlative clause is not a demonstrative, as in Hindi/Urdu, but an interrogative (see Belyaev and Haug 2020 on the typological difference between WH-based and DEM-based correlatives). Besides, correlatives in Gawarbatī almost obligatorily contain a special marker following the verb, *ba* in (1) and (-) *e* in (2).

- (1) [*karik* *ṣākuli-e* *mewa* *ker-ida:on* *ba*]
 [which branch-ERG fruit do-PLUPRF.3PL REL]
tasu *ṣākuli-obl* *t^hin-ana* *t^hi-ma:n*
 DIST.OBL.PL branch-OBL cut-DEBIT be-PRS.3SG
 ‘branches that bore fruits should be cut’
 (lit. which branches bore fruits, it is (necessary) to cut those branches)

- (2) [*swa:t-ana* *karik* *ḍa:kṭar-a:n* *ḍzi-met-e* *droṣ-ā:* *ki*]
 [Swat-ABL which doctor-PL come-PRS.3PL-REL Drosh-DAT to]
time *roṭṣan-a* *ki* *te* *ḍzi-met*
 DIST.NOM.PL rotation-OBL per here come-PRS.3PL
 ‘doctors who come from Swat to Drosh (they) come here on rotation’

While the marker (-) *e* is rarely found outside of correlatives, *ba* is also regularly used as a marker of conditional clauses (3).

- (3) [*ta:limja:fta* *ma:nuṣ-a* *leḍar* *ke-ok* *ba*]
 [educated man-OBL leader do-PST.1PL if]
inea: a:llah *aman-a* *la:m* *pudam* *di-ba*
 inshallah our-M village forward go-FUT.3SG
 ‘If we elect an educated man as our leader, inshallah, our village will move forward’

The use of *ba* in both correlatives and conditionals is strong evidence for a historical connection between these two types of constructions. Another argument for their close relation is that *ba*-correlatives (but not *e*-correlatives) tend to have the universal (‘whatever’) semantics which can be paraphrased using a conditional clause (‘whichever branches bore fruits’ ~ ‘if branches bore fruits’). In Belyaev & Haug (2020), it has been suggested that universal semantics is a

typical feature of WH-based correlatives due to their possible origin from conditional-like structures, and Gawarbati *ba*-correlatives present a clear case confirming this hypothesis.

The Gawarbati corpus also contains many occurrences of constructions of the type *karik* COP *ba/e* which I call “pseudo-correlatives”. They seem to represent a further step in the evolution of correlative clauses. Unlike standard correlatives, pseudo-correlatives do not contain a head NP following *karik* and do not have a correlate in the main clause. As illustrated in (4), they serve as topic or topic-shift markers.

- (4) *awal zama:na-a [karik bua ba]*
 earlier time-OBL [which be.PST.3M.SG REL]
asu bikili-an-i lau muekila:t amã: bot
 PROX.OBL.PL field-GEN-F many difficulties we.DAT be.PST.3PL
 ‘in earlier times, there were many difficulties in these fields for us’

Interestingly, in related Palula (Liljegren 2016: 419-425), we find the topic marker *ba* used alone in the same range of contexts as *karik* COP *ba* in Gawarbati. Further, Dameli (Perder 2013) seems to employ *ba* in conditionals, correlatives and as an independent topic marker (note, however, that conditionals are additionally marked by Urdu *agar* ‘if’). While the exact scenario of the interaction between these three constructions in HKIA is yet to be investigated, the presented data show that in the typological discussion of correlative-conditional relations (Rebuschi 2009: 110-119; Belyaev & Haug 2020) it is important to take into consideration one more component, namely, the interaction of correlatives and conditionals with topic marking (see, e.g. Bittner 2001: 4-6).

References

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