

Object position in Cappadocian and other Asia Minor Greek dialects

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ABSTRACT: This paper presents some preliminary observations on object position in Cappadocian and other Asia Minor Greek dialects. (S)V(O) order is normally used for indefinite objects presenting new (inactive) information. It is also used for definite objects presenting accessible (semiactive) information and definite objects presenting backgrounded given (active) information. The unmarked order for definite objects presenting given information is (S)OV. Such objects can also be emphatically presented as given information by placing them in sentence-initial position, i.e. O(S)V. Objects presenting given information are as a rule clitic-doubled, objects presenting accessible or new information not.

Keywords: Asia Minor Greek dialectology; Cappadocian; information flow; activation cost; word order; object position; clitic-doubling; definiteness

1. Introduction

In this paper I present some preliminary observations on word order and information flow in Cappadocian and other Asia Minor Greek dialects, with particular attention to the position of the direct object. The term “information flow” has been borrowed from Chafe (1994). It refers to such diverse but interrelated discourse functions as contrastiveness, referential importance, identifiability, newsworthiness, and notions such as topic-focus and given-new. Chafe (1994: 73) considers information flow in terms of “activation cost”: information is either active (given), semiactive (accessible) or inactive (new) at some point in discourse. Activation cost is determined primarily by “the speaker’s assessment of changing activation states in the mind of the listener” (Chafe 1994: 81). The flow of speech is to a large extent determined by the flow of information into and out of both “focal” (active) and “peripheral” (semiactive) consciousness (Chafe 1994: 30). This is particularly evident in languages with a so-called “free” word order such as Greek (in all its historical varieties), where the flow of speech generally moves from active to semi/inactive information. There are several exceptions to this general principle: active information may not be expressed at all in the case of the subject, Greek being a pro-drop language, or by a clitic pronoun in the case of the object, which in Greek exhibits “special” syntax in the sense of Zwicky (1977: 6). Information may be also expressed contrastively, crosscutting the active-semi/inactive dimension. Last but not least, intonation may overrule the “normal” flow from active to semi/inactive information, active information being typically verbalized with a weakly stressed noun or pronoun (if at all), semi/inactive information with a strongly stressed noun or pronoun.

The following examples from Cappadocian illustrate the issues at hand:¹

(1a) [*me to kamá-t*] *skótosén* *do_i* [*ekú to dev*]_i
 [with ART+ dagger-POSS.3sg] kill.AOR.IND.3sg CP.3sg_i [DEM ART+ giant]_i
 “with his dagger he killed that giant” (D354)

(1b) [*ekú to šamdán*]_i *épirén* *do_i* [*ap to cefáli-t*]_i
 [DEM ART+ candlestick] take.AOR.IND.3sg CP.3sg_i [from ART+ head-POSS.3sg]_i
 “he took that candlestick from her head” (D356)

In this pair of examples from Ulağaç, the definite direct object NPs are doubled by a postverbal clitic pronoun, whereas the word order is (X)VO in (1a) but OV(X) in (1b). In the following pair from Axó, the definite direct object NPs are doubled by a preverbal clitic pronoun, whereas the word order again varies between O(S)V in (2a) and (S)VO in (2b):²

(2a) [etó to aslán]_i tis to_i skótosen
 [DEM ART+ lion]_i who CP.3sg kill.AOR.3sg
 “who killed this lion?” (D394)

(2b) ótis to_i skótosen [etó to aslán]_i
 whoever CP.3sg kill.AOR.3sg [DEM ART+ lion]_i
 “whoever killed this lion” (D394)

The questions to be addressed in this paper are the following: what is the relation between word order and information flow in examples such as (1) and (2) and what is the relation between word order, clitic doubling and definiteness in these cases?

The structure of the paper is as follows. Section 2 gives an outline of Asia Minor Greek. Section 3 briefly summarizes the distribution of clitic pronouns in Asia Minor Greek. Section 4 discusses the relation between information flow and the position of the direct object in Asia Minor Greek. Section 5 summarizes the main conclusions of the paper.

2. Asia Minor Greek dialectology

The geographical designation “Asia Minor Greek” has gained wide currency since the publication of Thomason and Kaufman’s celebrated 1988 monograph on language contact.³ It was inferred from the title of Dawkins’ *Modern Greek in Asia Minor* who, however, explicitly restricted his investigation to dialects which were “native to Asia” or at least “pre-Turkish” (Dawkins 1916: 5). These include Pontic, Farasiot, Cappadocian, Silliot, Livisiot, Bithynian and the dialect of Gyölde near Kula. As a matter of fact, Dawkins’ book deals only with Cappadocian, Farasiot and Silliot, so it is misleading to equate the designation Asia Minor Greek exclusively with these three dialects. Moreover, there is no special relationship between Silliot on the one hand and Cappadocian and Farasiot on the other. The relationships between the Asia Minor Greek dialects as defined by Dawkins (1916: 204ff.) can be summarized as follows (nomenclature mine):⁴

1. Proto-Cappadocian
 - 1.1. Proto-Pontic
 - 1.1.1. Pontic
 - 1.1.2. Farasiot
 - 1.2. Cappadocian
2. Silliot
3. Livisiot
4. Gyölde
5. Bithynian

Several dialects show contact phenomena. As Dawkins (1916: 204ff.) points out, both Farasiot and Silliot have features in common with Cappadocian even though the former is more closely related to Pontic and the latter to Livisiot.⁵ What is more conspicuous, however, is the degree of Turkish interference in Asia Minor Greek, especially in Cappadocian. In some Cappadocian dialects the degree of Turkish interference is such that Thomason and Kaufman conclude that they “may be close to or even over the border of nongenetic development” (1988: 93f.). In other words, they can no longer be

considered Greek *dialects* in the full genetic sense, but rather Greek-Turkish *mixed languages* (in the sense of Thomason 2001: 11).⁶

3. The distribution of clitic pronouns in Asia Minor Greek

The distribution of clitic pronouns in Asia Minor Greek is characterized by what has been called clitic “float” (Janse 1998a: 260): clitic pronouns appear in both post- and preverbal position with finite verbs (except where the imperative is used, in which case they are always postverbal). Postverbal placement is the rule, preverbal placement being governed by syntactic and, to a lesser extent, discourse constraints. Preverbal placement is obligatory in the presence of modal and negative particles, subordinating conjunctions, relative pronouns and interrogative words (Janse 1998a: 261). Examples (2a)-(2b) illustrate the last two categories, (3a)-(3c) the first ones:

(3a) *as to fáyo m⁷*
 MP CP.3sg eat.AOR.SUBJ.1sg QP
 “will I eat him?” (D336)

(3b) *mí to fáyo m⁷*
 NEG CP.3sg eat.AOR.SUBJ.1sg QP
 “will I not eat him?” (D336)

(3c) *tón do éfaen*
 SUB CP.3sg eat.AOR.IND.3sg
 “when she ate it” (D444)

Words or phrases emphatically presented as new information occasionally seem to attract clitic pronouns into preverbal position (Janse 1998a: 262). The following examples are (in)direct answers to the question put in (2a):

(4a) *eγó to skótosa*
 I CP.3sg kill.AOR.IND.1sg
 “I killed it” (D394)

(4b) *eší to skótoses*
 you CP.3sg kill.AOR.IND.2sg
 “you killed it” (D394)

It may be noted that morphological distinctions of gender, case and number are often blurred or even reversed.⁸ In Cappadocian, the formally neuter clitic pronoun *to (do)* is generally used to refer to masculine, feminine and neuter nouns alike (Janse 1998a: 259). Its plural counterpart *ta (da)*, however, often refers to singular nouns as well, especially in Farasiot and Silliot (Janse 1998b: 539f.).

4. Information flow and the position of the object

Since information flow is determined by activation cost, it will be useful to start with some brief remarks about the expression of definiteness. In Cappadocian, indefinite animate objects are expressed by the nominative (Janse 2004: 7ff.):

- (5a) [*to peđi*] *θori* [*ena devrésis*]
 [ART+ boy.NOM./ACC.sg] see.PRES.IND.3sg [ART- dervish.NOM./ACC-.sg]
 “the boy sees a dervish” (D414)
- (5b) [*to devrés̃*]_i *léx* *to*_i
 [ART+ dervish.ACC+.sg]_i say.PRES.IND.3sg CP.3sg_i
 “he says to the dervish” (D414)
- (5c) *devrésis* *léx* [*to peđi*]
 dervish.NOM./ACC-.sg say.PRES.IND.3sg [ART+ boy.NOM./ACC.sg]
 “the dervish says to the boy” (D414)
- (5d) *devrésis* *psófsen*
 dervish.NOM./ACC-.sg die.AOR.IND.3sg
 “the dervish died” (D414)
- (5e) [*to peđi*] *šikosén* *do*_i [*to devrés̃*]_i
 [ART+ boy.NOM./ACC.sg] lift-AOR.IND.3sg CP.3sg_i [ART+ dervish.ACC-.sg]_i
 “the boy took up the dervish” (D414)

The nominative *devrésis* is used for both subjects (5c)-(5d) and indefinite objects (5a), on the analogy of the Turkish absolutive, which is also used to mark both subjects and indefinite or, more precisely, nonspecific objects (Kornfilt 1997: 214). The accusative *devrés̃* is used only for definite objects, either direct (5e) or indirect (5b). Because of the association of the nominative with indefiniteness, both specific and nonspecific (Janse 2004: 8), the definite article is not used to mark definite animate subjects (Janse 2004: 13), as in (5c)-(5d).

This phenomenon is called “differential object marking” (DOM) by Aissen (2003), after Bossong (1985), i.e. the tendency to mark objects that are high in animacy and/or definiteness and, conversely, not to mark objects that are low in animacy and/or definiteness (Janse 2004: 4). DOM also explains why indefinite inanimate objects are not marked differentially in Cappadocian and why definite inanimate subjects take the definite article (Janse 2004: 13), as in (5a) and (5e). A similar situation obtains in Farasiot, where indefinite animate objects are also marked by the nominative (6b), but in this dialect the definite article is used to mark both definite subjects (6c) and objects (Janse 2004: 13f.):

- (6a) *ítune* [*am babás*]
 be.IPF.3sg [ART- priest. NOM./ACC-.sg]
 “there was a priest” (D550)
- (6b) *ívre* [*lém babás*]
 find.AOR.IND.3sg [another priest. NOM./ACC-.sg]
 “he found another priest” (D414)
- (6c) *ípen* *di*⁹ *ci*¹⁰ [*o babás*]
 say.AOR.IND.3sg PRT PRT [ART+.NOM.m.sg priest. NOM./ACC-.sg]
 “the priest said: [...]” (D414)

The use of the indefinite accusative, whether or not accompanied by the indefinite article, signals new (inactive) information and indefinite objects typically occur in post-verbal position, as in (5a) and (6b). If subject and object are both indefinite, the normal order is SVO in Cappadocian:

- (7) [*ena xerifos*] [*éjišge*] [*ena fšáx*]
 [ART- man.NOM./ACC-.sg] have.IPF.IND.3sg [ART- child.NOM./ACC.sg]
 “a man had a son” (D364)

- (8a) [*ena áθropos*] [*iferén*] [*me*]
 [ART- man.NOM./ACC-.sg] bring.aor.ind.3sg CP.1sg
 [*ena partšalanmíš*] [*áθropos*]
 [ART- mangled man.NOM./ACC-.sg]
 “a man brought me a mangled man” (D448)

Indefinite objects can also be emphatically presented as new information, in which case they are placed in preverbal position. This is particularly evident in the case of contrastive objects. The following example is from the same text as (8a):

- (8b) *kótša* [*ena áθropos*]_i [*érapsá*] [*to_i*] [*ce*]
 lately [ART- man.NOM./ACC-.sg]_i sew.AOR.IND.3sg CP.3sg_i and
 [*etá to kundúra*]_i [*na mí to_i*] [*rápso*]
 [that ART+ boot-NOM./ACC.sg]_i MP NEG CP.3sg_i sew.AOR.SUBJ.1sg
 “lately I sewed up a man and I couldn’t sew up that boot?” (D448)

Note that the postverbal indefinite objects in (7)-(8a) are not clitic-doubled, contrary to the preverbal indefinite object in (8b).

Definite objects present either given (active) or accessible (semiactive) information. Where they occur in preverbal position, they always present given information and are always clitic-doubled, as in (8c). If the subject is also expressed, the normal order is SOV, which is also the unmarked order in Turkish (Kornfilt 1997: 91):

- (9a) *patišáxis* [*tši néka-t*]_i [*píren*] [*do_i*]
 king.NOM./ACC-.sg [ART+.ACC.f.sg wife-POSS.3sg]_i take.AOR.IND.3sg CP.3sg_i
 “the king took his wife” (D316)

- (9b) *xerifos* [*ta fšáxa*]_i [*píren*] [*da_i*]
 man.NOM./ACC-.sg [ART+ child-NOM./ACC.pl]_i take.AOR.IND.3sg CP.3pl_i
 “the man took the children” (D318)

- (10a) *ablá-t* [*do döšéi-t*]_i [*píren*] [*do_i*]
 elder sister.NOM.sg [ART+ bed-POSS.3sg]_i take.AOR.IND.3sg CP.3sg_i
 “his elder sister took his bed” (D370)

- (10b) [*do fšáx*] [*do döšéi-t*]_i [*távrisén*] [*do_i*]
 [ART+ child-NOM./ACC.sg] [ART+ bed-POSS.3sg]_i pull.AOR.IND.3sg CP.3pl_i
 “the boy pulled the bed” (D370)

- (11) [*do pei*] [*do cirjás*]_i [*ésecén*] [*do_i*]
 [ART+ boy.NOM./ACC.sg] [ART+ meat-NOM./ACC.sg]_i put.AOR.IND.3sg CP.3pl_i
 [*do kaná-t*] [*do leró*]_i [*ésecén*] [*do_i*]
 [ART+ wing-POSS.3sg] [ART+ water-NOM./ACC.sg]_i put.AOR.IND.3sg CP.3pl_i
 [*d álo-t*] [*to kaná-t*]
 [ART+ other-POSS.3sg] ART+ wing-POSS.3sg]
 “the boy put the meat on her wing, the water he put on her other wing” (D372)

- (12) [to peđi] [ta aráp]_i dayidá da_i
 [ART+ boy.NOM./ACC.sg] [ART+ negro-NOM./ACC.pl]_i dismiss.PRES.IND.3sg CP.3pl_i
 “the boy dismisses the negroes” (D416)

Definite objects can also be emphatically presented as given information, in which case they are placed in sentence-initial position as left-dislocated constituents. If the subject is also expressed, it presents contrastive or new information. Kesisoglou (1951: 49) discusses the following minimal pair from Ulağaç:

- (13a) [do pei] [do vavá-t]_i çórsen do_i
 [ART+ boy.NOM./ACC.sg] [ART+ father.ACC.sg]_i see.AOR.IND.3sg CP.3sg_i
 “the boy saw his father”

- (13b) [do pei]_i vavá-t çórsen do_i
 [ART+ boy.NOM./ACC.sg]_i father.NOM.sg see.AOR.IND.3sg CP.3sg_i
 “as for the boy, it was his father who saw him”

The following example from Silliot has two left-dislocated clitic-doubled definite objects and an indefinite subject emphatically presented as new information as a result of which it has attracted the doubling clitics into preverbal position, as in (4a)-(4b):

- (14) ména_i [túta úla]_j [is çizúris] mu_i ta_j róki
 me_i [DEM all.NOM./ACC.pl]_j [ART- holy.NOM.sg] CP.1sg_i CP.3sg_j give.AOR.IND.3sg
 “as for me, all these things, it was a holy man who gave them to me” (D290)

If definite objects occur in postverbal position, they either present given or accessible information. Postverbal position in combination with clitic-doubling signals given information, but the information is as it were “backgrounded”, though not necessarily right-dislocated, as in Turkish (Kornfilt 1997: 206). Examples are (1a), (2b) and (5e), where the referents of the postverbal definite objects are all active. Other examples include the following:

- (15) [to peđi] píren da_i [eci ta kaidúra]_i
 [ART+ boy.NOM./ACC.sg] take.AOR.IND.3sg CP.3pl_i [DEM ART+ ass-NOM./ACC.pl]_i
 “that boy took those asses” (D418)

- (16) ascér pónesan do_i [to peđi]_i
 soldier-NOM./ACC.pl be sorry.AOR.IND.3pl CP.3sg_i [ART+ boy.NOM./ACC.sg]_i
 “the soldiers were sorry for the boy” (D464)

Postverbal definite objects which are not clitic-doubled generally present accessible information. The following trio is from the same text as (9a)-(9b). The story begins with three sisters who dream of marrying the king’s son. Although neither the king nor his son have been mentioned, they are still presented as accessible information, the king being part of the setting of many Cappadocian stories. (17a) is the lament of the eldest, (17b) the middle sister’s and (17c) the self-confident reaction of the youngest:

- (17a) na píra [patišáxu to peđi]
 MP take.AOR.IND.1sg [king.GEN.SG ART+ boy.NOM./ACC.sg]
 “I would marry the king’s son [...]” (D316)

(17b) *na píra* *γό* [*patisáxu to peđí*]
 MP take.AOR.IND.1sg I [king.GEN.SG ART+ boy.NOM./ACC.sg]
 “I would marry the king’s son [...]” (D316)

(17c) [*patisáxu to peđí*]_i *eyó na to_i píra*
 [king.GEN.SG ART+ boy.NOM./ACC.sg]_i I MP CP.3sg_i take.AOR.IND.1sg
 “the king’s son, I would marry him [...]” (D316)

The difference between these three utterances is that the referent of *patisáxu to peđí* is presented as accessible information in (17a)-(17b), whereas it is emphatically presented as given information in (17c), as in (2a) and (13b).

Cases of contrastiveness are generally independent of activation cost (Chafe 1994: 77). In Cappadocian, double contrastiveness normally entails SVO word order and the absence of clitic-doubling, even if the referents of subject and object are active:

(18) *vasiléas* *píren* [*to ascéri-t*] *ce*
 king.NOM.sg take.AOR.IND.3sg [ART+ army-POSS.3sg] and
 [*to peđí*] *píren* [*to yutšá-t*]
 [ART+ boy.NOM./ACC.sg] take.AOR.IND.3sg [ART+ napkin-POSS.3sg]
 “the king took his army and the boy took his napkin” (D460)

(19) *eyó as páro* [*to korítš*] *ce*
 I MP take.AOR.SUBJ.1sg [ART+ girl.NOM./ACC.sg] and
eší épar [*to peí*]
 you take.AOR.IMP.2sg [ART+ boy.NOM./ACC.sg]
 “I will take the girl and you take the boy” (D378)

I conclude with some examples from a Cappadocian version of little Snow-White. The opening is characteristic for this type of story: two indefinite NPs presenting new information in the same order as in (7):

(20a) [*ena vasiléas*] *íxa*¹¹ [*ena néka*]
 [ART- king.NOM./ACC-.sg] have.IPF.IND.3sg [ART- wife.NOM./ACC.sg]
 “a king had a wife” (D440)

The referent of the postverbal indefinite object NP *ena néka* is now activated and expressed by the preverbal definite subject *nekát* in the next sentence, where a new referent is introduced by another postverbal indefinite object NP:

(20b) *néka-t* *jénen* [*ena korítš*]
 wife.NOM.sg-POSS.3sg give birth.AOR.IND.3sg [ART- girl.NOM./ACC.sg]
 “his wife gave birth to a daughter” (D440)

The referent of the preverbal indefinite subject NP *ena vasiléas* is activated as well and the same structure appears in the following sentence:

(20c) *vasiléas* *píren* [*ena álo néka*]
 king.NOM.sg take.AOR.IND.3sg [ART- other wife.NOM./ACC.sg]
 “the king took another wife” (D440)

In these three sentences the order is SVO, the flow of speech moving from inactive to inactive information in (20a) and from active to inactive information in (20b)-(20c). In the next sentence, the referents of the postverbal indefinite objects NPs *ena korítš* (20b)

and *ena álo néka* (20c) are activated and both appear as preverbal definite NPs, the object NP being clitic-doubled:

- (20d) [etó néka] [etó to koríts̃]_i ðén do_i θéliksen
 [DEM wife.NOM.sg] [DEM ART+ girl.NOM./ACC.sg]_i NEG CP.3sg_i want.IPF.IND.3sg
 “this wife didn’t like this daughter” (D440)

The same SOV structure is used further on, when the girl refuses to open the door to her evil stepmother for the third time:

- (20e) [etó to koríts̃] [ti θíra]_i ðén do_i ániksen
 [DEM ART+ girl.NOM./ACC.sg] [ART+ door.ACC.sg]_i NEG CP.3sg_i open.AOR.IND.3sg
 “this girl didn’t open the door” (D442)

5. Conclusion

The position of the direct object in Cappadocian and other Asia Minor Greek dialects is clearly relation to information flow, which generally moves from active (given) to semi/inactive (accessible/new) information. Indefinite objects presenting new information and definite objects expressing accessible information are usually placed in postverbal position. Definite objects presenting given information are usually placed in preverbal position, but they can also be backgrounded in which case they occur in postverbal position. Objects presenting given information are as a rule clitic-doubled, whereas objects presenting new or accessible information are not.

If both subject and object are definite and present given information, the unmarked order is SOV, at least in Cappadocian (and probably also in Silliot). The order of subject and object can be reversed if the object is left-dislocated and emphatically presented as given information and the subject presents contrastive or new information. If both subject and object are contrastive, the normal order is SVO. In this case, the object is not clitic-doubled, even if it presents given information.

The frequency of SOV word order is due to Turkish interference, and probably also the occurrence and particular interpretation of OSV structures. Detailed analyses of information flow in complete texts, with due attention to constituents other than subject, object and verb, are needed to corroborate and complete the picture sketched in this paper. As far as Cappadocian is concerned, such analyses will probably reveal dialectal differences in the frequency of the various word orders, in particular the ones which have been identified as Turkish. The study of Cappadocian word order is thus an important contribution to the identification of its dialects as either Greek *dialects* or Greek-Turkish *mixed languages*.

Note

1. Abbreviations: ABS = absolute, ACC = accusative, ACC+ = definite accusative, ACC- = indefinite accusative, AOR = aorist, ART+ = definite article, ART- = indefinite article, CP = clitic pronoun, D = Dawkins 1916, F = feminine, GEN = genitive, IMP. = imperative, IND = indicative, IPF = imperfect, M = masculine, MP = modal particle, N = neuter, NEG = negative particle, NOM. = nominative, NP = noun phrase, O = object, 1pl = first person plural (etc.), PRES = present, PRT = particle, QP = question particle, S = subject, 1sg = first person singular (etc.), SUB = subordinating conjunction, SUBJ = subjunctive, V = verb, VP = verb phrase, X = any phrase. A hyphen - marks the attachment of suffixes.

2. Note that S is not an NP but a pronoun in both (2a) and (2b), cf. §3.

3. See especially Thomason & Kaufman (1988: 215ff.).
4. I use the term Proto-Cappadocian, because the geographical designation Cappadocia used to include Pontus in Antiquity (Strabo, *Geography* 12.1.1). Condoravdi and Kiparsky use the term Proto-Pontic in an entirely different interpretation, viz. “Later Classical Greek” (2001: 31).
5. Apart from these “native” dialects, there are many more non-native ones, i.e. dialects of populations which had been settled in Asia Minor in post-Turkish times before the population exchange between Greece and Turkey in the 1920s. Of these three deserve special mention: Propontis Tsakonian, Smyrniot and the dialect of Aivali Moschonisi.
6. Dawkins seems to think of Asia Minor Greek in terms of languages rather than dialects as well: “These Asiatic dialects have been separated so long from the rest of the Greek world that they require a quite separate treatment; almost as the Romance languages have to be studied separately, and find a connexion only in their common parent” (1916: vii). Drettas (1997: 19) takes a similar view of Pontic (cf. Janse 2002: 226).
7. The enclitic particle *m* is the Turkish interrogative particle *mi* (Kornfilt 1997: 5; Lewis 2000: 103), with apocoped unstressed final /i/.
8. Detailed discussion in Janse (forthcoming a; b). For the Pontic personal suffixes see Drettas (1997: 250).
9. The enclitic particle *di* is used to introduce reported speech. It probably derives from *óti* (Dawkins 1916: 654).
10. The enclitic particle *ki* is from Turkish *ki* (Lewis 2000: 210ff.) and used to introduce reported speech, always in combination with *di* (Dawkins 1916: 685).
11. Note the ending *-a* instead of *-e* in *íxa* to maintain the velar pronunciation of the /x/ (Dawkins 1916: 71).

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