Nominal causal expressions in Turkic

1. Problem

The present study aims to outline the intra-genetic typology of nominal causal constructions in Turkic languages. Examples of the nominal causal expressions from Chuvash (Maloe Karachkino variety) are given in (1)–(2):

(1) *totər*   *koɕol-**ba***   *jëben-ze*
handkerchief   tear-INS   get_wet-
CV_SIM'The handkerchief got soaked from tears.'

(2) *torat*   *jurə*   **bergi**   *xoz-əl-za*
branch   weight because   break-REFL-
CV_SIM'The branch broke from the weight.'

Although there are several typological studies analyzing polypredicative causal constructions (Martowicz 2011; Diessel and Hetterle 2011; Cristofaro 2013; Zaika 2019), there is yet no typologically oriented analysis of nominal causal arguments. At the same time, languages usually have varied means of encoding causal relationships in the NP, cf. Chuvash examples above, illustrating the use of Instrumental case and a specialized postposition, and the following examples from Kazakh, featuring Ablative and Dative:

(3) *oramal*   *köz*   *jas-y-**nan***   *su*   *bol-dy*
handkerchief.NOM   eye.NOM   tear-POSS3-ABL   water.NOM   be-
PST.3SG'The handkerchief got soaked from tears.'

(4) *äiel-ı*   *küieu-ı-nıñ*   *ait-qan* *söz-ı-**ne***   *jyny* *kel-dı*
wife-POSS.3 husband-POSS.3-GEN say-PERF word-POSS.3-DAT   angry come-
PST.3SG
'The wife got angry at her husband's words.'

The diversity of morphosyntactic coding strategies used by languages to encode cause in the nominal domain makes this problem particularly interesting for consideration from the perspective of intragenetic typology.

2. Materials

This study describes the organization of the causal semantic field in Turkic languages, including the identification of common syncretism patterns as well as the differences in the grammatical systems of individual languages. The study is based on the materials of the NoCaCoDa database (Say et al., to appear). The questionnaire (Say 2021), used in the database, includes 54 stimulus sentences, each of which is diagnostic for the combination of several variability parameters, including objectivity, directness, temporal relationships between the cause and the consequence, and the internal or external nature of the cause. The study considers data from four Turkic languages: Chuvash (Bulgar group), Kazakh and Kyrgyz (Kipchak group), and Uzbek (Karluk group). Although the current sample does not cover all genetic units of the first division level, it can nevertheless be considered sufficiently representative at this stage. Since this study is a work in progress, I plan to add data for other languages later. The data were collected by elicitation with the help of language experts in 2022.

3. Results

In all four languages considered, the most common grammatical case marker used to encode causal relation is the Ablative. In the Uzbek dataset, the Ablative is also the most frequent encoding mean in general, which is used in 28 translations out of 54. In Kazakh, the coverage of the Ablative is less broad with 17 translations. In Kyrgyz and Chuvash, we find 10 and 7 translations out of 54, respectively. In its non-causal usages, Ablative covers the semantic roles belonging to the "Source" cluster. That means that the considered Turkic languages are prone to conceptualize the causal relation through the metaphor CAUSE IS MOVEMENT FROM THE SOURCE. The core causal meanings, conceptualized this way in Turkic, are **direct internal causes**, as shown by the following Uzbek examples:

(5) *yerkak[1] odam[2] och-lik-dan kayt-ish kel-di*
man[1,2].NOM hunger-ADJ-ABL die-RECP come-PST.3SG 'The man died of starvation.'

(6) *yerkak[1] odam[2] kamtar-lig-i-dan jim tur-di*
man1,2.NOM shy-NMLZ-POSS.3-ABL silent stand-PST.3SG 'The man kept silent out of modesty.'

Other grammatical cases, e.g. Dative (semantic cluster "Goal") and Instrumental (semantic cluster "Instrument") are commonly used in Turkic to encode the stimulus of emotive predicates, as in example (7) from Chuvash. Cf. similar remarks for Bashkir in (Mishchenko 2022).

(7) *xĕr atɕa xəj-ën otsenki-be kilĕş-se*
daughter child self.P_3-GEN mark-INS like-CV_SIM The girl is satisfied with her grade.

In all the languages examined, the wide use of specialized (i.e. not used outside of the causal domain) causal postpositions is striking. Thus, the most neutral and frequent way to encode cause in Chuvash is the postposition *pergi* 'because of' (17 translations out of 54). In Kyrgyz even more widespread is the postposition *uchun* 'because of' (21 contexts). The postpositions *kesirinen* 'because of' and *karaganda* 'because of' are widely used in Kazakh and Uzbek, although neither of them is as basic as the corresponding postpositions in Chuvash and Kirghiz. In the talk, I will track the grammaticalization paths of the mentioned postpositions and try to explain why different languages show different levels of use of specialized postpositions.

The Turkic languages of the sample also differ in relation to the possibility to encode cause with the help of a noun phrase in general. Thus, Chuvash speakers demonstrate a high preference for causal expression of the cause in some contexts, where other Turkic varieties freely allow nominal expression. Consider the following pair of examples from Chuvash (8) and Kyrgyz (9):

(8) *arzin viɕ-sa vil-ze*
man starve-CV_SIM die-CV_SIM 'The man died, starving.'

(9) *kişi achkalyk-tan kaza[1] bol[2]-du*
man hunger-ABL умереть[1,2]-3SG.PST 'The man died of starvation'

This parameter will also be considered in more detail in the talk.

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