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## Relativisation in Slavic-Romance language contact: The case of Molise Slavic in Italy

In my talk I will give an overview of the relative markers in Molise Slavic, including their usage and their origin. This South Slavic micro-language, still spoken in three villages in the southern Italian region of Molise, has been under Romance dominance (Italian Standard and its regional dialects) for about 500 years. So, it is no surprise that we find here quite a lot of contact-induced changes, which include the field of relativisation. We will refer to Molise Arbrisht (Albanian) as a *tertium comparationis*, as it shows a parallel contact influence.

Relativisation in Molise Slavic is mainly achieved by means of relative clauses, as participles – contrary to the gerund – have been lost. The main relativiser is the relative marker *ka* (phonetic variant *ke*). It is indeclinable with respect to gender and number, and no difference is made for things and persons. It mainly appears in attributive relative clauses in subject and direct-object positions (NOM/ACC); see example (1). In other cases and with prepositions it is replaced by inflected forms, thus acquiring kind of a “suppletive paradigm”. These forms are derived from the case forms of *ko* ‘who’, e.g. *kime*, see example (2). Nevertheless uninflected *ka* may also be applied outside the NOM/ACC-sphere, for example, when replacing prepositional phrases in relative function, especially in careless speech; see (3), first occurrence.

As for language contact, *ka* was borrowed from Italian *che* (local variant *chə*). Contrary to this case of matter borrowing the paradigm as such may be seen as a case of pattern borrowing, based on the model of the Italian substitution of *che* in the oblique cases by *cui*, in its turn the inflected form of *chi* ‘who’. Just like Italian *che*, Molise Slavic *ka* also functions as a complementizer; see the second occurrence of *ka* in (3), and as a causal conjunction (= ‘because’), but, contrary to Italian *che*, it can never replace the interrogative pronoun *što* ‘what’, neither in questions nor in (relative) object or subject clauses; see (4). On the other hand, Molise Slavic *što*, contrary to Serbo-Croatian *što*, is excluded as a relative marker, even for relativising personal pronouns, e.g. *ono ka* (= scr. *ono što*); see the second occurrence of *ka* in (1).

Several reasons speak against deriving *ka* from a genuine Slavic root *\*k-* ‘what, who’. In the first place we have to consider that Molise Slavic is Štokavian, so a derivation from *kaj* ‘what’ (as would be possible in Kajkavian or Slovene) is excluded. Further reasons come from the far-reaching parallelism in the usage of *ka* with Italian *che*, including their suppletive paradigms. But still stronger is the argument that we find *ke* (*ka*) also in Arbrisht, where an inner-Albanian derivation from *çë* ‘what’ is completely impossible. By the way, in Arbrisht *çë* ‘what’, contrary to Standard Albanian, functions as a relative marker, by copying the model of Italian *che* and thus providing another case of pattern borrowing in language contact.

Finally, Molise Slavic *ka* shares another structural parallelism with Italian *che* in showing alternation with the relative pronoun *koji*, going back to the corresponding interrogative pronoun meaning ‘which’, in Italian *il quale*; see both relativisers in (5). Furthermore, there is a strong tendency in Molise Slavic to avoid *koji* in NOM and ACC, which is also true for Italian *il quale*, but not for Serbo-Croatian *koji*.

A special case is the short form *ki*, being uninflected for gender, number and case. It is absent from the Serbo-Croatian standards, but its inflected equivalents *ki*, *ka*, *ko* exist in Čakavian dialects. It remains unclear if *ki* is a short form of *koji* or rather an independent formation like, for example, Upper Sorbian *kiž* (going back to the Proto-Slavic deictic particle *\*ky* + relativising *\*že*); see also Slovene *ki(r)*. Like the basic relativiser *ka*, Molise

Slavic *ki* is restricted to NOM and ACC. On the other hand, it is mainly used only as an interrogative pronoun, while it seems to be at least avoided (if possible at all) as a relative marker.

*Examples*

- (1) *Bihu            čeljade            ka            ju            dajahu*  
 be.IPRF.3PL person.NOM.PL REL(NOM.PL) DAT.SG.F give.IPFV.IPRF.3PL  
*ono            ka            ju            morahu            dat.*  
 that.ACC.N REL(ACC.SG) DAT.SG.F can.IPRF.3PL give.PFV.INF  
 ‘There were persons that gave her what they could give her.’
- (2) *Je            bi            ju            osta            sama, s            dvami*  
 AUX.3SG.PRS PQP DAT.SG.F leave.PFV.PTCP.SG.M alone with two.INS.M  
*dicami            e            sendza            nišča            s            kime            živit.*  
 child.INS.PL and without nothing with who.INS live.INF  
 ‘He had left her alone, with two children and without anything they could live on.’
- (3) *Pratikivaša            onu            midičinu            ka            tuna*  
 practice.IPFV.IPRF.3SG that.ACC.SG.F medicin.ACC.SG.F REL all.NOM.PL  
*govoraju            ka            nije            dobra.*  
 say.IPRF.PRS.3PL CPL be.NEG.PRS.3SG CPL good.NOM.SG.F  
 ‘She practiced that medicine that (=about which) all say that it is not good.’
- (4) *Sa            sa            vičina            za            vit            što            je            bi*  
 AUX.1SG RFL approach.PRF.PTCP.SG.M for see.INF what.NOM AUX.3G PQP  
*mu            surtila.*  
 DAT.SG.M happen.PFV.PTCP.SG.N  
 ‘I approached, in order to see, what had happened to him.’
- (5) *Hoće            dat            masariju            jenomu            ka            umi*  
 want.PRS.3SG give.PFV.INF farm.ACC.SG.F one.DAT.SG.M REL can.PRS.3SG  
*rabit            njive,            jenomu            kojomu            je*  
 work.PRS.INF field.ACC.PL.F one.DAT.SG.M which.DAT.SG.M be.PRS.3SG  
*drag            teg.*  
 dear.NOM.SG.M work.NOM.SG.M  
 ‘He wants to give his farm to someone who is able to work the fields, to someone who likes work.’