Correlative pronouns in Ossetic complement clauses

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In Ossetic, the subordinators mostly occur with correlative pronouns/adverbs in the matrix clause (1)–(2). Correlatives are obligatory in adverbial and relative clauses (except for purpose clauses), while in complementation they can be dropped (2), see Abaev (1950), Bagaev (1982), Belyaev (2015) for details.

Abaev (1950) proposes the following rule for the omission of correlative pronouns in complementation: the pronoun is obligatory if the matrix clause is postposed, and optional if the matrix clause is preposed (Abaev 1950: 719). Hence, there are three possible constructions with respect to the order of the matrix and the complement clause:

(A) MatrCl DepCl əj   (B) MatrCl  DepCl    (C) DepCl əj MatrCl

It remains unclear what triggers the omission of correlative pronouns if the matrix clause is preposed, i.e. in cases (A) and (B). I claim that the correlative marks the pragmatic presupposition. In other words, it is present if the complement is topical or refers to presupposed/old/expected information. This claim is supported by corpus data (Ossetic National Corpus, http://corpus.ossetic-studies.org/search/index.php?interface_language=ru) and elicitation. I provide the following evidence in support of my claim:

1) With the subordinator əj and in asyndetic construction the correlative pronoun is required in the context of the factive (presupposition inducing) verbs, and it is dropped with semi-factive ‘know’ exactly in presupposition-opaque contexts (Karttunen 1973).

2) With semi-factive and non-factive verbs (in terms of Kiparsky and Kiparsky 1971) the correlative pronoun distinguishes between factive and non-factive propositions (see Asher 1993, Peterson 1997), e.g. between complement clauses belonging to the presupposition and to the assertion. It is most often absent in contexts where the dependent clause presents new information, or in irrealis contexts.

3) The correlative pronoun is unacceptable in contexts of falsity of the complement (3) and in (quasi-)performative contexts (4), which are incompatible with the factive reading (and thus, presupposition of the truth of the complement) according to Benveniste (1966).

4) The subordinator əma, which introduces propositions but cannot introduce facts, does not take correlatives in complementation.

With irrealis and eventive complements, correlatives encode aforementionedness, topicality and expectedness:

5) In the case of aforementionedness, non-factive irrealis clauses take the correlative pronouns.

6) Eventive complements with perception and emotive verbs take the correlatives in case of topicality or direct aforementionedness (5).

7) Complements of the verb ‘wait’ take the correlative in case of expectedness of the situation in the complement clause, consider the contrast between (6) and (7).

Therefore, I claim that correlative pronouns/adverbs are used if the complement clause is presupposed, constitutes the topic, or encodes old/expected information. All these types of contexts can be generalized in terms of pragmatic presupposition.

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Examples:

(1) \[\text{[salənm} \, \text{m} = \text{dan} \, \text{m} = \text{səşt \, 3rt:iv-a}], \quad \text{walənm} \, \text{m} \text{as.long.} \text{as} \text{thee.DAT my eye shine-SBJV.3SG to.that.time} \]
\[\text{də} = \chi \text{is-ən \quad binont-ə \quad kəj \quad ba-kən} \]

‘As long as I’m alive, take care of your family.’ (Gagkaev 1956: 227)

(2) \[\text{zə \, žon-ən, \quad [\text{zawər čožg kəj \, ər-xašt-a}], \quad (\text{wəj})} \]
\[\text{I know-PRS.1SG \quad Zaur \quad girl \quad COMP \quad PV-take-PST.3SG \quad that.DEM} \]

‘I know that Zaur has married.’

(3) \[\ast \text{də \, žon-əš, \quad [\text{zawər čožg kəj \, ər-xašt-a}], \quad \text{wəj}, \quad \text{fsəz}} \quad \text{you \quad know-PRS.2SG \quad Zaur \quad girl \quad COMP \quad PV-take-PST.3SG \quad that.DEM} \quad \text{but \quad wəj}} \]
\[\text{that.DEM} \quad \text{true \quad NEG-be.PRS.3SG} \]

Intended meaning: ‘You know that Zaur has married, but this is not true.’

(4) \[\text{quš-ən} \quad = \text{dən \quad kən-ən, \quad [nər-əj \quad fəštəz-əm \quad am \quad nəl}} \quad \text{listen-INF \quad thee.DAT \quad do-PRS.1SG \quad now-ABL \quad later-ALL \quad here \quad no.more} \quad \text{kuš-əš} \quad (*\text{wəj}) \quad \text{work-PRS.2SG} \quad \text{that.DEM} \]

‘I declare that you’re fired.’ (pronounced by an authorized person)

(5) \[\text{zə \, nə \quad fe-q"əšt-ən, \quad [χəl \quad kəj \quad kot-əj], \quad \text{wəj}} \]
\[\text{I \quad NEG \quad PV-hear-PST.1SG \quad quarrel \quad COMP \quad do-PST.3PL \quad that.DEM} \quad \text{em} \quad \text{m} \quad \text{nə \quad wərn-ə} \quad \text{and \quad me.GEN \quad NEG \quad believe-PST.3SG} \]

(Zaur quarreled with his wife!) ‘I haven’t heard that they quarreled, and I don’t believe it.’

(6) \[\text{ənqəlməz \quad kašt-əštəm, \quad [war-ən \quad kəzd \quad ba-nsaj-ən]} \quad \text{wo-məz} \quad \text{(wait) \quad look-PST.1PL \quad rain-INF} \quad \text{if} \quad \text{PV-stop-FUT[3SG]} \quad \text{that-ALL} \]

‘We were waiting until the rain stops.’ (ONC)

(7) \[\text{ənqəlməz \quad kəš, \quad [salənməz = dən \quad wərəš-ə \quad pac:əχ \quad js= \quad bəndon} \quad \text{(wait) \quad look[IMP.2SG]} \quad \text{until \quad thee.DAT \quad Russia-GEN \quad emperor \quad his \quad throne} \quad \text{əfštəw \quad a-vər-ə]} \quad \text{on.credit \quad PV-give-SBJV.3SG} \]

‘Wait for the Russian emperor to lend you his throne.’ (ONC)

References


Kiparsky, Paul & Carol Kiparsky. 1971. Fact. In Jakobovits, Leon & Danny Steinberg (eds.).