

## Relative Clauses in the Neo-Aramaic dialect of Telkepe

The dialect in this study is spoken by Christians from the village of Telkepe located north of Mosul. In earlier varieties of Aramaic, relative clauses could be introduced by a particle *d-*, which also served to mark the possessor in genitive constructions. In most NENA dialects the main reflex of this morpheme appears as a suffix on the modified noun: *-əd*, but a prefixed *d-* also occurs in certain circumstances (depending on the particular variety). In Telkepe both are possible, whether the noun is being modified by another noun or by a clause, as in the following examples:

- (1) *ʿar-əd g-zar-i-lb kəm-zar-i-lb.*  
 land-REL IND-SOW-3PL-OBJ.3FSG PST.PFV-SOW-3PL-OBJ.3FSG  
 ‘The land which is sowed (lit. they sow it), they sowed.’
- (2) *maṭamiṭv ʿāwv – bəʿə u ḥalib d-iwan ṭəqt-áy,*  
 spoon(f.) DEM.M eggs and milk REL-PRES.COP.1FSG beat.RES.FSG-POSS/OBJ.3PL  
 ‘a spoonful of that – eggs and milk that I’ve beaten’

When the head NP is not coreferential with the subject of the clause, it is generally resumed with a pronoun/pronominal index, as in the examples above. This is not always the case, however, especially when it is coreferential with the direct object.

The precise strategies used to introduce relative clauses varies according to the following factors: definite/indefinite head and restrictive/unrestrictive relative clause. Broadly speaking all relative clauses with a definite head are introduced by *d-*; those with an indefinite head, only when restrictive:

- (3) *məndi t-āwə ʿatiqv.*  
 thing REL-be.3MSG old.MSG  
 ‘Something (which is) old.’

Unrestrictive relative clauses after an indefinite head are typically simply juxtaposed:

- (4) *ʿattan xənná→axov ʿilə b-beṭv*  
 we.have other.MSG-brother PRES.COP.3MSG in-house  
 ‘We have another brother who is at home’  
 (lit. ‘We have another brother, he is at home’)

Restrictive relative clauses with a definite head are distinguished from their unrestrictive counterparts by the presence of a demonstrative:

- (5) *ʿan = nāšə d-muḥke-lan ʿəll-áy, | pləṭ-la surāya. |*  
 DEM.PL = people REL-spoke-1PL about-3PL came.out-3PL Christians  
 ‘Those/the people who we spoke about turned out to be Christians.’

This presentation will examine in detail the rules and tendencies behind the syntax of relative clauses in the dialect of Telkepe and compare them to related dialects, in order to judge the extent of microvariation in this area.