Relative Clauses in English and Turkish:
A Contrastive Study

Ahmed Jamal Rauf
University of Kirkuk / College of Education for Humanities

ABSTRACT

The study deals with relative clauses in English and Turkish. It states the formal characteristics and restrictive/non – restrictive relative clauses in these two languages. It aims at showing the similarities and differences at some points in relative clauses between English and Turkish.

It is hypothesized that there are differences in grammatical structures between these two languages in relative clauses. The study has arrived at the following conclusions:

1- In English, all relative clauses are finite while in Turkish most of them are non –finite and some of them are finite.
2- Relative clauses in English are determined by pronouns, whereas in Turkish they are suffixes.
3- In English, personal and non-personal pronouns are used in relative clauses, while in Turkish the same suffixes are used to refer to personal and non-personal.

1- Introduction

In English, a relative clause is functionally a postmodifier in a noun phrase. It is introduced by a wh- word, which has a grammatical role in the relative clause in addition to its linking function. The relativizer points back to the head of the noun phrase, which is generally referred to as the antecedent (Biber et al., 1999: 195). In addition, Thomson and Martinet (1986: 8) define a relative clause that describes the preceding noun in such a way as to distinguish it from other nouns of the same class. They also add that a clause of this kind is essential to a clear understanding of the noun.

Tallerman (1999:82-83) states that two properties of English relative clauses should help to identify them. First, this can be seen in:

1- *I met the students who hadn't read the book.*

That the relative clause in English may just follow straight after the noun head, or else it may begin with relative pronouns. Second, relative clause in English contains a gap which has a missing noun phrase as in (＿＿had not read the book). It can be understood that the gap refers to the head noun.

In Turkish, relative clause is a complex adjectival construction that modifies a noun phrase. The most typical type of relative clause is non – finite, and contains one of the participle suffixes – (y) An, - DIk, or – (y) AcAk, corresponding to the relative pronouns 'who', 'whom', 'whose', 'which', 'that', 'where', etc. in English. Finite relative clauses, incorporating the subordinator 'ki' also occur but the range of this type quite limited. All relative clauses precede the noun phrase they modify, in the same way that adjectives precede the noun they modify:

2- *Oyuncak-lar- ɪ n- ɪ -kr ɪ -an(kucuk) k ɪ z.*
- 'the (little) girl who has broken her toys'
3- *Her gün okul-da gör-dgü-um kiz.*
- 'the girl whom I see at school every day'

4 - *Anne-si-yla tan ɪ ş-acay-im k ɪ z.*
-'The girl whose mother I am going to meet' (Goksel and kerslake, 2005: 380)

   The current paper aims at presenting a contrastive study between English and Turkish languages. It is hypothesized that there are similarities and differences in some points in relative clauses between these two languages. Therefore, Turkish sentences are rendered into English between brackets which were furnished by their original authors.

2- Formal Characteristics of Relative Clauses in English

   Quirk et al. (1985: 1245) mention that part of the explicitness of relative clauses lies in the specifying power of the relative pronouns showing concord with its antecedent, i.e. the preceding part of the noun phrase of which the relative clause is a postmodifier:

A- Who: If the subject of the relative clause is a person, 'who' is used but not 'which':

5- *I'd like to give the blankets to people who really need them.*

B- Which: If the subject of the relative clause is non-human, 'which' is used but not 'who'.

6- *Are you going to throw out the foot which has gone off?*

C- Whom: It is used with an antecedent having the feature of + human and must be in accusative case:

7- *Is that the person who/ whom you invited?*

   'Whom' is mainly used in a formal context, and in spoken English it may seem pedantic (Parrott, 2000: 354).

D- Whose: The relativizer 'whose' has a syntactic role comparable to the possessive determiners, and is typically used to mark a possessive relationship between a human head noun and some other noun phrases, with the two together comprising the gap in the relative clause:

8- *And we also know that there's at least one and may be two other white males whose names we do not know* (Biber et al, 1999: 617).

E- That: It can be used in defining clauses to replace any relative pronoun except 'whose':(for more details about Restrictive relative clauses, see section 4):

9- *Nobody who l that watched the match will ever forget it* **(Thomson and Martinet 1985: 82).**

F-Relative Clauses of Time, Place, and Reason: Relative clauses of time, place, and reason are possible in which when, where, and why, are used in place of words like 'the time, the place, and the reason':

10- *1979 was (the year) when my son was born.*

11- *This is (the place) where I grew up.*

12- *That's (the reason) why he dislikes me* **(Alexander, 1988: 22).**

G- The Relative Pronoun 'What': Eastwood (2005: 381) explains that 'what' can be used in the following pattern:

13- *We'd better write a list of what we need to pack***. (=The things that we need to pack).**

3-Formal Characteristics of Relative Clauses in Turkish

Goksal and kerslake (2005: 381) state that the head noun of the noun phrase which a relative clause modifies, i.e. the head noun can have different relationships with the relative clause:

A-Markers of Non-Finite Relative Clauses: The participle suffixes: 1-(y) An

A non-finite verb form which contains –(y)An is not inflected for the   case or person except in headless relative clauses. This participle occurs in the following circumstances:

(i) In clauses where the relativized constituent is the subject of the verb in the relative clause:

14- *[burada sat – ɪ l-an]kitap-lar (cf.kitaplar burada sat ɪ l ɪ yor).*

- 'The books [(which are) sold here]'.

15- *[öğretmenol-an] Haydar(cf.Haydar öğretmen).*

-    **'Haydar,[who is a teacher]'.**

(ii) In clauses where the relativized constituent is the possessor of some constituents of the relative clause:

(a) Where this possessor is part of the subject of the verb in the relative clause, it begins with a non –case-marked noun phrase marked with a 3rd person possessive suffix. For example:
16- *[araba-s ı çal- ı n-an] komşu-muz.*
- 'Our neighbor [whose car was stolen]'.

(b) Where this part of some constituent of the relative clause other than its subject such as:

(b1) A direct object:
17- *[koyun-lar ı n- kurt-kap-an] köylü-ler'.*
The villagers [whose sheep were caught by wolves].

(b2) An adverbial:
18- *[çat ı -s ı n-danbirkaç küçük kiremit düs-en].*
- 'The house [from the roof of which a few small tiles fell]'.

(b3) A possessive-marked postposition:
19- *[arka-s ı n-da-adamol-an] çocuk (cf. çocuğun arkasinda adam var).*
- The child [behind whom there is a man] (Ibid: 382).

2- Dik and –(y)AcAk
Hengirman (2010: 79) states that these participles have identical structural properties in terms of their role in relative clauses; but they differ in terms of tense, that is -(y)AcAk refers to future situations :
20- *[Fat ma'n ı n yar ı n gör- eceğ-i] film.*
- The film [that Fatma is going to see/ will be seeing tomorrow].
- Dik and – (y)AcAk are used in the following circumstances:
(i) In clauses where the relativized constituent is the direct object of the verb in the relative clause:

21- *[bil-diğ-im] bir turizm şirketi (cf.Bir turizm şirketi biliyorum).*
- 'A tourist agency[(that) I Know]'.

22- *[gönderecekleri] temsiki (cf. Bir temsilci gönderecekler).*
- 'The representative [(whom they will send)'.

(ii) In clauses where the relativized constituent is the oblique object or the adverbial modifier of the verb in the relative clause:
23- *[benim korktugum]. Bazi hayvanlar* (**cf. Baz**ı **hayvanlardan korkuyorum**).
    -   'Some animals [of which I am /was afraid]'.
24- *[Turhan-in-et-*ı *kes-eceğ-i] biçak* (**cf. Turhan eti b**ı **çakla kesecek**).
    -   'The knife [with Turhan will / would cut the meat]'.

(iii) In clauses where the relativized constituent is the relative clause other than its subject, as exemplified below:

The Direct Object
25- *[usta-n*ı*n kaps*ı*-s*ı*n-*ı *değiştir-eceğ-i] çamaşir makinasi* (**cf. Usta çamaşir makinasinin kapisini değiştirecek**).
    -   'The washing machine [of which the engineer is /was going to change the door]'.

An Adverbial
26- *[k*ı*z-*ı*n-a piyano ders-iver-diğ-im]* **hanim** (**cf. Bir hanimin kizina piyano dersi veriyorum**).
-'The lady [to whose daughter I give I gave piano lessons]'.

A possessive-marked postpositon:
27- *[ön-ün-den köprü-nün geç-tiğ-i] ev-ler (cf. köprü evlerin önünden geçiyor).*
- 'The houses [in front of which the bridge is situated]'.

(B) Marker of Finite Relative Clauses, the Suffix/ki/:

   Yildirimalp (1980:300) indicates that in this form no relative pronoun is needed as in English. Only, the part that gives more information about the subject, the relative clause, serves as an adjectival clause. So, it must be placed previous to the subject.
Suffix (ki) is added to the last word of the clause. The most important thing to remember is that, the subject and the relative clause exchange places in Turkish:
28- *Hangi adam hızlı yürüyor ? (Sokaktaki adam).*
- **Which man is walking fast ? (The man on the street).**
29- *Masadaki kitap benim değil.*
- [The book on the table is not mine].

4- Restrictive and Non-Restrictive Relative Clauses in English
   Swan (2005: 479) explains that some relative clauses identify or classify nouns: They tell us which person or thing, or which kind of person or thing is meant.(In grammar, these are called defining or restrictive relative clauses)..identifying,
30- *People who take physical exercise live longer.*
31- *Have you got something that will get ink out of a carpet?*

   Other relative clauses do not identify or classify, they simply tell us more about a person or thing that is already identified. (In grammar, these are-called 'non-identifying', 'non- defining', or 'non-restrictive' relative clauses):
32- *This is Ms Rogers, who is joining the firm next week.*
33- *In 1908 Ford developed his model T car which sold for $500.*

   Quirk et al. (1985: 1248) mention that in restrictive clauses, frequent use is made of the 'wh-pronouns' and also 'that' or zero relative. That differs from wh- series in the following:

(i) In not having gender marking and thus being independent of personal or non-personal character of the antecedent,
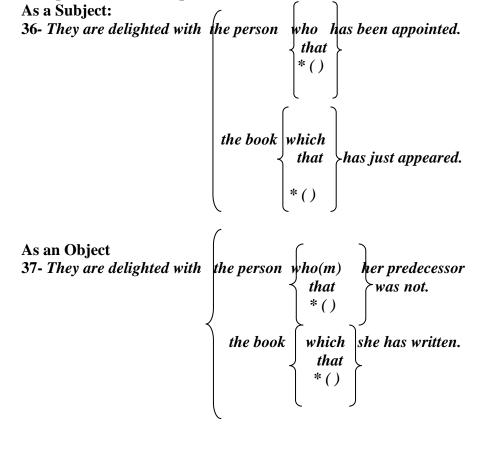
(ii) In not having an object form (like who/ whom),
(iii) In not having a genitive (like whose of who and which), thus not being able to function as a constituent of an element in the relative clause.

   In restrictive relative clauses, a parenthesized relative pronoun is used, it means that there is option between that-relative and 'zero':
34- *This is the book (that) I bought at the sale.*
35- *This is the book (   ) I bought at the sale.*

   Restrictive relative pronouns function respectively as subject, object, complement, and adverbial (or complement in a prepositional phrase functioning as adverbial) in the relative clause with personal and non-personal antecedents:

As a Subject:
36- *They are delighted with the person* { *who / that / * ( )* } *has been appointed.*

the book { *which / that / * ( )* } *has just appeared.*

As an Object
37- *They are delighted with* { *the person* { *who(m) / that / * ( )* } *her predecessor was not.*

the book { *which / that / * ( )* } *she has written.* }

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As a Complement
38- *She is the perfect accountant* { *which   her predecessor was not.*
who
that }

39- *This is not the type of modern house* { *which*
**that*
( ) } *my own is.*

As an Adverbial
40- *He is the policeman* { *at whom the burglar fired the gun.*
{ *who (m)   the burglar fired the gun at.*
that
* ( )* } }

41- *I make cakes the way* { *in which   my mother made them.*
that
* ( )* }

(Ibid: 1244).

Quirk and Greenbaum (1973: 383) manifest that the loose non-restrictive relationship is often semantically in distinguishable from coordination (with or without conjunction) or adverbial subordination as I indicate by paraphrases of the examples below. The repertoire of pronouns is limited to the wh- items:

42- *Then he met Mary* { *who invited him to a party.*
and she invited him to a party.

43- *Here is John Smith* { *'who(m) I mentioned the other day.*
; I mentioned him the other day.

44- *He got lost on Snowdon,* { *which was enveloped in fog.*
when it was enveloped in fog.

With non-restrictive relative clauses, there is a tone unit boundary, often accompanied by a pause before the relative clause, and, often, a repetition at the end of the relative clause of the nuclear tone of the tone unit preceding the relative clause. In writing, nonrestrictive relationship is usually marked off by commas as in:

45- *Then he met Mary, who in\vited him to a party.*   (Written)

46- *Then he met |MÀRY|-who in\vited him to a PÀRTY.*   (Spoken)

By contrast, with restrictive relative clauses, there is usually no tone unit boundary or pause before the relative clause, nor in writing is the relative clause separated by a comma from what precedes as in:

47- *That is the girl (that) he met at the party.* (Writing).

48- *That is the girl (that) he mèt at PÀRTY*. (Spoken) (Quirk et al, 1985: 1258).

5- Restrictive and Non-Restrictive Relative Clauses in Turkish

Goksel and kerslake (2005:388) show that restrictive relative clauses express a limitation on the reference of the noun they modify, and thus have an identifying function:

49- *[yapraklar ı dökül- enağaçlar].*

- 'Trees [that lose their leaves]'

In the above example, there is limitation reference of trees to those that lose their leaves.

On the other hand, non-restrictive relative clauses add new information about referents that are in no need of identification, and thus have a merely descriptive function:

50- *[Damad ı yla hiçbir zaman iyi geçinmemiş (olan Hayriye Hanim].*

- 'Hayriye Hanimm,who had never got on well with her son-in-law'.

In (50), the relative clause provides additional information about 'Hayriye Hanim, a person whom the hearer is assumed to be able to identify' (ibid, 389).

In Turkish, the typical usage of a relative clause with a participle suffix is restrictive. Thus (51) is more likely to be interpreted as 'the trees (that) like ratherthat' the trees, which I like so much,

51- *[sev-diğ-imağaç-lar].*

- **The trees (that) I like.**

As a result, in the spoken language proper nouns do not often occur as the relativized constituent of a relative clause, since their referents are not usually in need of identification. If a proper noun does occur in conversation as the head of a relative clause, this is again usually with a restrictive meaning.

In (52) the usage of 'bu' 'this' in the subsequent mention of the name makes the identifying function explicit:

52- *[Kenan' in evleneceği]Ayşe, işte bu Ayşa.*

- **'This is the Ayşa [that kanan is going to marry]'.**

However, the nonrestrictive usage of relative clause is quite common in the written language, where it can be used as a stylistic device to avoid monotonous succession of finite clauses

53- *[Bugün yurda dönen] Cumhurbaşkani, saat 16 da bir basin toplant ı s ı düzenleyecek.*

- **'The president, [who is returning to the country today]' will hold a press conference at 4 p.m.';**

The head noun in non-restrictive relative clauses (finite clause) with (-ki) functions as the subject of the main clause. It is also usually 3rd person singular or plural:

54- *Ayşa, [ki şu anda mutfakta yemek pişiriyor,] birazdan ortaya çikacak.*

- **'Ayşa [who is cooking in the kitchen at the moment,] will appear soon'.**

55- *komşu-muz [ki oldukça tan ı nm ı s bir piyanist-miş] evinde s ı k s ı k oda muzigi konserleri düzenliyor.*

- 'Our neighbor, [who is apparently quite a well-know pianist,] often organizes chamber music concerts at his home. (Ibid:396).

Conclusions

The present study has arrived at a number of conclusions for both English and Turkish relative clauses, they are as follows:

1- In English, all relative clauses are finite while in Turkish most relative clauses are non-finite and some of them are finite.
2- In English, relative clauses are determined by pronouns while in Turkish, they are suffixes.
3- In English, personal and non-personal pronouns are used while in Turkish, the same suffixes are used to refer to personal and non-personal, cf.:

  (English)   (Turkish)
Who → personal   <----------------------   =(y)An, -Dik
Which → non-personal <---------------

4- The suffixes, in Turkish, precede the nouns that modify. In English, the pronouns follow the nouns that they modify.
5- Restrictive and non-restrictive relative clauses in English and Turkish have the same functions in referring to the noun head.
6- In both English and Turkish, restrictive relative clauses are common in written and spoken languages.
7- In both English and Turkish, non-restrictive relative clauses are marked by commas.
8- The use of non-restrictive clause is common in written rather than spoken in Turkish.

9- **Finite relative clauses with (-ki) occur mainly in the non-restrictive function in Turkish, but this type of clause cannot be used in English.**

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اشباه الجمل الموصولة في اللغتين الانكليزية والتركية: دراسة مقارنة

الخلاصة

تتناول الدراسة اشباه الجمل الموصولة في اللغتين الانكليزية والتركية. تبين الدراسة الصفات التركبية واشباه الجمل الموصولة المقيدة وغير المقيدة في كلتا اللغتين. وهي تهدف الى عرض التشابهات والاختلافات في بعض النقاط في اشباه الجمل الموصولة في اللغتين الانكليزية والتركية.

وقد تم الافتراض بان هناك اختلافات في التراكيب النحوية في اشباه الجمل الموصولة في كلتا اللغتين وقدتم التوصل الى النتائج الاتية:

١- كل اشباه الجمل الموصولة محددة في اللغة الانكليزية بينما معظم اشباه الجمل الموصولة غير محدده وبعضها محدده في اللغة التركية.

٢- في الانكليزية،تحدد اشباه الجمل الموصولة بالضمائر بينما تحدد باللواصق في اللغة التركية.

٣- نستخدم الضمائر الشخصية وغير الشخصية في اشباه الجمل الموصولة في الانكليزية بينما نستخدم نفس اللواصق في الاشارة الى الضمائر الشخصية وغير الشخصية في اللغة التركية.