

Incorporation and Case in Turkish

In Turkish, both a bare noun and a noun phrase including a numeral (henceforth NumP) can be caseless in the object position. This structure in Turkish has been analyzed as incorporation. Showing that the structure in question is really pseudo-incorporation, Ozturk (2005) makes a case for the non-distinctness of a caseless bare nominal and a NumP. Both are the result of the complex predicate formation between a verb head and a nominal phrasal category that merges as a sister to that verb, licensing the lack of case.

However appealing this approach may be, it fails to capture important differences between the two constructions (Aydemir 2004). Aydemir concluded that bare nouns have to be occurring as instances of head incorporation to yield the effects she documents. I propose to reconcile the two sets of findings. Bare nouns and NumP's are phrasal and thus syntactically visible (pace Ozturk 2005), but they are merged into the structure in different positions (so they are different). They both show incorporation effects (lack of overt case, narrowest scope) due to being spelled out in the first phase (Chomsky 2001).

(1) shows that NumP's, but not bare noun phrases, occupy a position that aspectually quantizes the predicate. I argue that this position is the specifier of an empty Result head which subsequently merges with a V head, whose specifier introduces an UNDERGOER (Ramchand 2008). RESULTEEs remerge here for EPP reasons and pick up undergoer semantics. In the case of the bare noun, however, there is no RP involved, the NP is introduced in the VP as UNDERGOER, lacking the possibility of a telic interpretation.

- (1) a. Ali (bir saat boyunca)/(**bir saat-te*) çay iç-ti.
Ali (one hour along)/(one hour-LOC) tea drink-PAST
'Ali drank tea (for an hour)/(**in an hour*).'
- b. Ali (bir saat-te) bir (bardak) çay iç-ti.
Ali (one hour-LOC) one glass tea drink-PAST
'Ali drank a (glass of) tea (in an hour).'
- (Aydemir 2004)

Attributing this aspectual property to the lexical semantics of explicit number *bir* 'one' does not solve the problem. A plural object, then, would yield telicity, which it doesn't.

- (2) a. Ali (**bir saat-te*) çay-lar iç-ti / şiir-ler oku-du.
Ali one hour-LOC tea-PL drink-PAST poem-PL read-PAST
'Ali drank glasses of tea / read poems (**in an hour*).'

The second problem is modification with adjectival adverbs. NumP's cannot cooccur with adjectival adverbs, but bare nouns can. Unlike the adjective in (3a), the adjective in (3b) can only be interpreted within the NP. But this interpretation is out because of semantic incompatibility (Example slightly changed from Aydemir 2004).

- (3) a. Oya bugün yavaş müze gez-di.
Oya today slow museum tour-PAST
'Oya toured museums slowly today.'
- b. #Oya bugün yavaş bir müze gez-di.
Oya today slow one museum tour-PAST
'#Oya toured a slow museum today.'

I show that this class of adjectival adverbs is VP adverbs, merged as the specifier. First, all of them are manner adverbials which restrict the range of events denoted by the verb,

almost forming a complex predicate along with it. A similar class is susceptible to Adverb Incorporation in various languages (see Alexiadou 1997). Second, these adverbs always receive nuclear accent unless they are given in the discourse. Following Kahnemuyipour (2004), I take this to be an indication of their position, namely VP.

Coupled with the introduction of RP below VP, the facts follow straightforwardly. NumP, introduced as Spec, Result, needs to raise to Spec, V. However, the adverb is already merged in this position before the NumP can move (3b). The bare noun is best characterized as a ‘rhematic NP’, merged as a complement to V. This leaves the specifier free for the adverb to merge in, leading to the grammaticality of (3a). Cases of so-called agent incorporation are easily accounted for when we take such agents to be rhematic. The rhematic NP, i.e. the agent, is merged as a sister to V, while the theme is merged into the specifier position associated with the UNDERGOER semantics and accusative case.

As for overtly marked NPs, they are either merged as RESULTEE, yielding a telic reading (4b), or as UNDERGOER, yielding an atelic reading (4a), but not as a rheme. This position is saved for non-familiar/ non-specific material in Turkish. NPs are then moved out of VP and are marked/ specified for overt case as a consequence. In both cases, however, an (accented) adjectival adverb has to follow these, an indication that they left VP.

- (4) a. Ali ip-i (*iki saat-te) (yavaş) taşı-dı. [Atelic]
 A. rope-ACC two hour-LOC slow carry-PAST
 ‘*Ali carried around the rope in two hours slowly.’
- b. Ali ip-i (iki saat-te) (yavaş) getir-di. [Telic]
 A. rope-ACC two hour-LOC slow bring-PAST
 ‘Ali brought the rope in two hours slowly.’

In effect, I am proposing a three-way distinction between possible direct objects in Turkish, instead of the two-way distinction implicit in most of the work which only cuts a line between case-marked and incorporated: caseless RESULTEE, caseless RHEME, and case-marked. Caseless NPs are spelled out in the first phase, which, I suggest, may yield incorporation semantics (narrowest scope, non-compositionality etc.) and phonology (lack of overt case, accent assignment etc.) crosslinguistically. Overtly marked NPs form a third class in many respects by virtue of being spelled-out in a subsequent phase. Finally, how these findings fare with theories of case checking will be discussed in light of Baker and Vinokurova’s treatment of the Sakha case system.

References:

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