

Case and Agreement in Turkish Equative Copular Clauses

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Introduction: Turkish equative copular constructions differ from their English counterparts in two respects. First, both DPs appear in NOMINATIVE form (bare) as illustrated in (1).

- (1) Ben o-yum.
1SG.NOM 3.SG.NOM-COP.PRES.1SG
'I am him/her.'

Second, agreement on the copula is subject to a participant-based person hierarchy (1/2 > 3) which determines the DP whose φ -features are realized on the copula. As illustrated in (1) – (5), agreement targets a participant DP (1/2), preferring the higher DP; if the higher DP is 3rd person, agreement shifts to a lower participant DP.

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| (2) <u>Ben</u> sen-im.
1SG 2SG-COP.PRES.1SG
'I am you.' | (4) <u>Sen</u> o-sun.
2SG 3SG-COP.PRES.2SG
'You are him/her.' |
| (3) <u>Sen</u> ben-sin.
2SG 1SG-COP.PRES.2SG
'You are me.' | (5) O <u>ben-im</u> / <u>sen-sin</u> .
3SG 1SG-COP.PRES.1SG / 2SG-COP.PRES.2SG
'S/he is me / you.' |

Copular constructions differ from verbal clauses across the same dimensions. In verbal clauses, the lower DP receives ACCUSATIVE case and it is never agreed with regardless of the person features of the two DPs.

- (6) O ben-i gör-dü-Ø / *gör-dü-m.
3SG.NOM 1SG-ACC- see-PAST-3SG / see-PAST-1SG
'S/he saw me.'

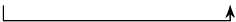
To account for these facts, we propose that (i) agreement in Turkish is case-discriminating (Preminger 2014), and (ii) the agreement probe bears two unvalued features, [PART, π]. Person hierarchy effects, as in ((5)), arise when a single probe agrees with both goals, yielding Feature Gluttony (Coon and Keine 2021). Unlike in Hindi or German, this does not lead to ineffability, because the competing Vocabulary Items consist of an overt suffix for {1st/2nd person} and a null exponent for {3rd person}. This suggests that null exponents do not give rise to an indecision problem during Vocabulary Insertion.

Modeling Case in Turkish: Accusative case has been analyzed as a dependent case assigned to the lower of two DPs in a local domain (Marantz 1991; Baker 2015). This approach has been extended to Turkish by Dikmen, Demirok, and Atlamaz (2023), who propose that the lower DP receives dependent ACCUSATIVE when two DPs occur within the same CP. While this correctly derives case assignment in verbal clauses, it incorrectly predicts accusative in copular clauses, where both DPs surface as nominative. We therefore propose that dependent ACCUSATIVE in Turkish is contingent on the presence of a *v* head and is assigned only in *v*+T configurations (as originally proposed by Marantz (1991)). In all other CP contexts, DPs receive unmarked NOMINATIVE case. This accounts for the distribution of nominative and accusative DPs across verbal and non-verbal clauses in Turkish.

Agreement is Case Discriminating in Turkish: With the exception of ECM constructions, agreement in Turkish never tracks an accusative case marked DP. Thus, we assume that agreement tracks UNMARKED case. This accounts for the lack of agreement with ACCUSATIVE objects in verbal predicates, regardless of the person configurations. In ECM configurations, we argue that there is a timing issue: Agreement in the embedded clause happens before ACCUSATIVE is assigned to the embedded subject.

Cyclic Probing and Feature Gluttony: We argue that the agreement probe in Turkish is situated on T and it is specified for a participant feature [PART] and a person feature [π]. 1st/2nd person pronouns consist of both [PART, π] features and 3rd person pronouns only consist of [π] features (Harley and Ritter 2002). Following Béjar and Rezac (2009), we assume that a probe can continue its search until it has satisfied all of its features. With these assumptions in place, we get the following configurations.

Configuration 1. Participant Subject: When the higher DP (DP1) is a participant pronoun (1/2) as in (7), DP1 matches all the features of the probe and the probe stops searching after agreeing with the subject. This accounts for the fact that in (2) and (3), the subject is agreed with despite both arguments being participant pronouns.

$$(7) \quad T_{[PART,\pi]} \quad DP1 = \{1/2\} \quad DP2 = \{1/2/3\}$$


Configuration 2. Non-participant Subject: When the higher DP (DP1) is not a participant pronoun but the lower DP (DP2) is, as in (8), T first establishes agreement with DP1 (valuing [π]), and then continues probing to agree with DP2, since [PART] is still unvalued.

$$(8) \quad T_{[PART,\pi]} \quad DP1 = \{3\} \quad DP2 = \{1/2\} \quad (9) \quad T_{\{\pi\},\{PART,\pi\}}$$


The configuration in (8), yields a gluttonous probe which is valued twice, once by DP1 and then by DP2 as illustrated in (9). The entire feature set on each DP is copied due to the coarseness of valuation (Béjar and Rezac 2009). The two feature sets on T compete at Vocabulary Insertion. Coon and Keine (2021) and Bhatia and Bhatt (2023) show that such instances of gluttony lead to ineffability in German and Hindi-Urdu unless the competing Vocabulary Items are syncretic. Turkish data suggest that syncretism is not the only resolution strategy. When one of the competing exponents is null (as in 3SG agreement), the overt exponent can be inserted without triggering a competition failure at Vocabulary Insertion.

References

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