

On Singular Indefinites in Turkish

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Specificity from Theoretical and Empirical Points of View
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Proposals on the Turkish Accusative Marker

- Discourse-linking (Nilsson 1985; Enç 1991; Zidani-Eroğlu 1997).
- Specificity (von Heusinger 2002; von Heusinger and Kornfilt 2005).
- Presuppositionality (Diesing 1992; Kelepir 2001)
- Individuation/Particularization (Nilsson 1985; Bolgün 2005; Kılıçaslan 2006)
- Totality/Delimitedness (Nilsson 1985; Nakipoğlu 2009)

The outline of the talk

- 1 The interpretive effects of **Acc** vs. \emptyset
- 2 Are Turkish \emptyset indefinites semantically incorporated?
- 3 A proposal

Turkish Singular Indefinites

- The basic structure:

NP \rightarrow Modifier* *bir* Noun

- Modifier can be an adjectival, relative clause, ordinal etc.
- The determiner *bir* is distinct from the numeral *bir*.

- Subj Mod* *bir* Noun $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{-Acc} \\ \text{-}\emptyset \end{array} \right\}$ Verb

- Intermediate Scope:

Çoğu dilbilimci önemli bir problem(-i) çöz-en her makaleyi oku-muş-tur.
most linguist important a problem(-**Acc**) solve-Rel every article-Acc read-Ev.Cop-Aor
'Most linguists have read every article that solves an important problem.'

- **Acc**: *most* $\forall \exists$ /*most* $\exists \forall$ / \exists *most* \forall

\emptyset : *most* $\forall \exists$

- Other case-markers are aligned with **Acc**.

Opacity

- (1) a. **Bir sekreter** ar-1yor-um. (opaque)
a secretary- \emptyset seek-Prog-1sg
'I am looking for a secretary.'
- b. **Bir sekreter-i** ar-1yor-um. (transparent)
a secretary-**Acc** seek-Prog-1sg
'I am looking for a secretary.'
- (2) a. **Bir kitap** ar-1yor-um. (opaque/transparent)
a book- \emptyset seek-Prog-1sg
'I am looking for a book.'
- b. **Bir kitap-ı** ar-1yor-um. (transparent)
a book-**Acc** seek-Prog-1sg
'I am looking for a book.'
- Dede (1986): \emptyset -objects are transparent/opaque ambiguous when inanimate.

Acc and Specificity

Two perspectives

- Enç (1991):
 - The distinction between *which* vs. *who* or *what* (Pesetsky 1987).
 - A discourse-level familiarity effect (Heim 1982).
 - Enç-specificity ↔ Acc
- von Heusinger (2002):
 - “a specific NP functionally linked to the speaker. . . or another referential expression in the sentence such as the subject or object.”
 - independence from the matrix predicate or semantic operators such as modal verbs.
 - Acc → Specificity; when immediately pre-verbal and optional (von Heusinger and Kornfilt 2005).

Acc and Specificity

- (3) a. Her öğrenci **bir metod-u** izleyecek.
every student **a method-Acc** will follow
'Every student will follow a method.'
- b. Her öğrenci **bir metod** izleyecek.
every student **a method-∅** will follow
'Every student will follow a method.'

Enç Specificity

A problem

- (4) a. John bir işadamı-nı kaçırmış.
J. a businessman kidnapped
'John has kidnapped a businessman'
- b. John bir travesti-yı bıçaklamış.
J. a transvestite stabbed
'John has stabbed a transvestite.'

Enç Specificity

A problem

- (6) a. John bir işadamı-nı kaçırmış.
J. a businessman kidnapped
'John has kidnapped a businessman'
- b. John bir travesti-yı bıçaklamış.
J. a transvestite stabbed
'John has stabbed a transvestite.'
- (7) a. Dün bir doktor-u arabasını yıkarken gördüm.
yesterday a doctor-**Acc** washing his car saw.1sg
'Yesterday, I saw a doctor washing his car.'
- b. Geçen gün bir doktor-u hastasına sigara ikram ederken gördüm.
yesterday a doctor-**Acc** offering a cigarette to his patient saw-1sg
'Yesterday, I saw a doctor offering a cigarette to his patient.'

Acc and Negation

- (8) a. John iyi bir kitap getirmedi. $(\neg \exists)$
J. a good book- \emptyset bring-Neg-Pst
'John didn't bring a good book'
- b. John iyi bir kitab-1 getirmedi. $(\exists \neg)$
J. a good book-**Acc** bring-Neg-Pst
'John didn't bring a good book'
- (9) a. John iyi bir kitap getir-me-yebilir. $(\neg \exists)$
J. a good book- \emptyset bring-Neg-Psb
'John may not bring a good book'
- b. John iyi bir kitab-1 getir-me-yebilir. $(\exists \neg / \neg \exists)$
J. a good book-**Acc** bring-Neg-Psb
'John may not bring a good book'

Acc and Existential Presupposition

Diesing 1992; Kelepir 2001

- (10) Konferans-a Türkçe bilen bir İzlandalı-yı çağıralım.
conference-Dat Turkish speaking a Icelander-**Acc** invite-Opt-1pl
'Let us invite a Turkish speaking Icelander to the conference.'

Interim Summary

- \emptyset -indefinites always take narrow scope; **Acc**-indefinites are flexible..
- **Acc** do not necessarily induce functional dependencies.
- It induces discourse-linking, under certain conditions.
- **Acc**-marked indefinites obligatorily take scope over negation, in a non-modal context; otherwise its scope is ambiguous.
- \emptyset -indefinites are opaque for animates, opaque or transparent for inanimates; **Acc**-indefinites are always transparent.
- **Acc** does not induce existential presupposition.

Are Turkish \emptyset -indefinites “semantically incorporated”?

Type-theoretic perspectives on “weak”/“strong”

- “Strong” case vs. “weak” case correlates with a semantic type distinction.
- E.g., van Geenhoven (1998):
 - “weak” NPs denote properties (*et*)
 - “strong” NPs denote quantifiers (*ett*), or entities (*e*).

- (11) a. $\text{verb} := \lambda x \lambda y. \text{verb}'xy$
b. $\text{verb} := \lambda p \lambda y \exists x. px \wedge \text{verb}'xy$

Are Turkish bare indefinites semantically incorporated?

Problem 1

- Obligatory Acc-marking:
 - Proper Names;
 - Demonstratives;
 - Pronouns;
 - *kim* ('who'), but not *ne* ('what');
 - NPs modified with *-ki* (locative relatives);
 - Genitive-possessives, ((non)-relational);
 - Expressions carrying the possessive suffix (*s*)*I*; *bir-i* ('someone'), *biri-si* ('someone'), *bazı-sı* ('some'), *hangi-si* ('which one') *kimi-si* ('some'), *hep-si* ('all'), (*bir*) *başka-sı* ('some other'), *diğer-i* ('the other') and so on.
- Genitive-possessives are predicable.
- Keleşir (2001): The constraint cannot be a purely formal one related to the possessive suffix (Nilsson 1985; Kornfilt 1997).

Are Turkish bare indefinites semantically incorporated?

Problem 2

- Type-match is necessary for coordinability.

$[A \text{ and } B] \rightarrow T(A) = T(B)$ (Gazdar 1981).

(12) *Mary $\underbrace{[\text{likes Harry}]}_{et}$ and $\underbrace{[\text{saw}]}_{e(et)}$.

Are Turkish bare indefinites semantically incorporated?

Problem 2

- (13) a. Ahmet-e bir gömlek ve şu saat-i al-acağım.
A.-Dat a shirt and that watch-Acc buy-Fut.3sg
'I will buy Ahmet a shirt and that watch over there.'
- b. Ahmet-e şu saat-i ve bir gömlek al-acağım.
A.-Dat that watch-Acc and a shirt buy-Fut.3sg
'I will buy Ahmet that watch over there and a shirt.'
- (14) a. Merhaba, bir görevli ve John-u ar-ıyorum.
Hi a officer and John-Acc seek-Prg
'Hi, I am looking for an officer and John.'
- b. Merhaba, John-u ve bir görevli ar-ıyorum.
Hi a officer and John-Acc seek-Prg
'Hi, I am looking for John and an officer.'

Are Turkish bare indefinites semantically incorporated?

Problem 2

Example	*	Nsp.	Sp.	Both	Total
13a: [Indef. & Def.] buy	-	7	-	-	7
13b: [Def. & Indef.] buy	2	5	-	-	7
14a: [Indef. & Def.] seek	6	-	-	-	6
14b: [Def. & Indef.] seek	5	-	-	1	6

Table: Native speaker judgments for examples 13 and 14.

The Proposal

Properties vs. kinds

- Turkish Ns denote kinds.
 - they can get incorporated;
 - they can appear as the object of *invent*-type verbs.
- ‘*bir* N’ denotes “an instance of kind N”:

$$\frac{bir := \lambda k \lambda x. \mathbf{Ins}(x, k) \quad doktor := \mathbf{doctor}}{bir\ doktor := \lambda x. \mathbf{Ins}(x, \mathbf{doctor})} >$$

The Proposal

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 - they can get incorporated;
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- ‘*bir* N’ denotes “an instance of kind N”:

$$\begin{array}{l} \text{bir} := \lambda k \lambda x. \mathbf{Ins}(x, k) \quad \text{doktor} := \mathbf{doctor} \\ \hline \text{bir doktor} := \lambda x. \mathbf{Ins}(x, \mathbf{doctor}) \end{array} >$$

- (16) a. This is my brother John.
b. Kendisi (MIT’de) akademisyen-dir.
he MIT-Loc academic-Cop
‘He is an academic (in MIT).’
c. Kendisi (*MIT’de) bir akademisyen-dir.
he MIT-Loc an academic-Cop
‘He is an academic (in MIT).’

The Proposal

Acc and \emptyset

- Acc is the argument case; it turns the predicate on its left to a generalized Skolem term (Steedman 2009):

$$\frac{\text{bir doktor} ::= \lambda x. \mathbf{Ins}(x, \mathbf{doctor})}{sk_{\lambda x. \mathbf{Ins}(x, \mathbf{doctor})}^{\mathcal{E}}} \text{---Acc}$$

- A \emptyset indefinite:
 - stays as a predicate for *seek*.
 - type shifts to an existential (Chierchia 1998):

$$\frac{\text{bir doktor} ::= \lambda x. \mathbf{Ins}(x, \mathbf{doctor})}{\text{bir doktor} ::= \lambda p \lambda y \exists x. \mathbf{Ins}(x, \mathbf{doctor}) \wedge \text{one}'x \wedge pxy}$$

Justification

Weak/Strong

- Obligatory Acc-marking:
 - Proper Names;
 - Demonstratives;
 - Pronouns;
 - *kim* ('who'), but not *ne* ('what');
 - NPs modified with *-ki* (locative relatives);
 - Genitive-possessives, ((non)-relational);
 - Expressions carrying the possessive suffix (*s*)*I*; *bir-i* ('someone'), *biri-si* ('someone'), *bazı-sı* ('some'), *hangi-si* ('which one') *kimi-si* ('some'), *hep-si* ('all'), (*bir*) *başka-sı* ('some other'), *diğer-i* ('the other') and so on.
- Turkish Genitive Possessives do not have “kind-modification” readings; *Men's shoe* is covered by a compound *erkek ayakkabı-sı* ('man shoe-Poss.3sg')
- They are ruled out at *I'll make an X out of Y.* type of contexts.

Justification

Opacity and animacy

- (17) a. **Bir sekreter** ar-1yOr-um. (opaque)
a secretary seek-Prog-1sg
'I am looking for a secretary.'
- b. **Bir sekreter-i** ar-1yOr-um. (transparent)
a secretary-**Acc** seek-Prog-1sg
'I am looking for a secretary.'
- (18) a. **Bir kitap** ar-1yOr-um. (opaque/transparent)
a book seek-Prog-1sg
'I am looking for a book.'
- b. **Bir kitap-ı** ar-1yOr-um. (transparent)
a book-**Acc** seek-Prog-1sg
'I am looking for a book.'

Acc and Specificity

- (19) a. Her öğrenci **bir metod-u** izleyecek.
every student **a method-Acc** will follow
'Every student will follow a method.'
- b. Her öğrenci **bir metod** izleyecek.
every student **a method-∅** will follow
'Every student will follow a method.'

Acc and Specificity

(20) a. Every student **a method-Acc** follow-will

$$\text{b. } \forall s.M(s, s'_0, spk') \rightarrow \forall x.stu'_{s'_0}x \rightarrow follow'_s(sk'_{\lambda z.\mathbf{Ins}_{s'_1}(z, \mathbf{method}) \wedge C'_{s'_2}}(s, x))x$$

(21) a. Every student **a method- \emptyset** follow-will

$$\text{b. } \forall s.M(s, s'_0, spk') \rightarrow \forall x.stu'_{s'_0}x \rightarrow \exists z.\mathbf{Ins}(z, \mathbf{method}) \wedge follow'_s z x$$

Justification

Scope and negation

(22) a. John iyi bir kitab-1 getirmedi. (∃ ¬)
J. a good book-**Acc** bring-Neg-Pst
 ‘John didn’t bring a good book’

b. John iyi bir kitab-1 getir-me-yebilir. (∃ ¬/¬ ∃)
J. a good book-**Acc** bring-Neg-Psb
 ‘John may not bring a good book’

(23) a. $\neg(\text{bring}'sk'_{\text{good}'book'}\text{john}')$

b. $\neg(\forall s.K(s, s'_0, spk') \rightarrow \text{bring}'(sk'_{\text{good}'book'_s})^{(s)}\text{john}')$

c. $\neg(\forall s.K(s, s'_0, spk') \rightarrow \text{bring}'(sk'_{\text{good}'book'_{s'_0}})^{(s)}\text{john}')$

d. $\neg(\forall s.K(s, s'_0, spk') \rightarrow \text{bring}'(sk'_{\text{good}'book'_{s'_0} \wedge C})^{(s)}\text{john}')$

Summary

- Specificity is not marked, it is computed.
- Specificity is an epiphenomenon Farkas 2002.
- A specific reading is meant by the speaker or attributed to the speaker by the hearer. Kripke 1977; Ludlow and Neale 1991; Bende-Farkas and Kamp 2001; Schwarzschild 2002.
- The difference between **Acc** vs. \emptyset may boil down to the difference between generalized Skolem terms and existential quantification over instances of kinds, if such a distinction really exists.

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