On Singular Indefinites in Turkish

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Specificity from Theoretical and Empirical Points of View

Stuttgart
Proposals on the Turkish Accusative Marker

- 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. Ø

2. Are Turkish Ø indefinites semantically incorporated?

3. A proposal
The basic structure:

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

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Subj Mod* bir Noun \{ -Acc
-∅ \} Verb
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Intermediate Scope:

Most linguists have read every article that solves an important problem.

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

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

Other case-markers are aligned with Acc.
(1) a. **Bir sekreter** ar-iyor-um. (opaque)
   a secretary-∅ seek-Prog-1sg
   ‘I am looking for a secretary.’

   b. **Bir sekreter-i** ar-iyor-um. (transparent)
   a secretary-Acc seek-Prog-1sg
   ‘I am looking for a secretary.’

(2) a. **Bir kitap** ar-iyor-um. (opaque/transparent)
   a book-∅ seek-Prog-1sg
   ‘I am looking for a book.’

   b. **Bir kitab-ı** ar-iyor-um. (transparent)
   a book-Acc seek-Prog-1sg
   ‘I am looking for a book.’

- Dede (1986): ∅-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).
(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 kaçırımız.  
J. a businessman kidnapped  
‘John has kidnapped a businessman’  

b. John bir travesti-yı bıçaklamış.  
J. a transvestite stabbed  
‘John has stabbed a transvestite.’
(6) a. John bir işadamı-nı kaçırmış.
   J. a businessman kidnapped
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   b. John bir travesti-yı biçaklamış.
   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.  
   J. a good book-∅ bring-Neg-Pst  
   ‘John didn’t bring a good book’ 
   \(\neg \exists\) 

b. John iyi bir kitab-ı getirmedi.  
   J. a good book-Acc bring-Neg-Pst  
   ‘John didn’t bring a good book’ 
   \(\exists \neg\) 

(9) a. John iyi bir kitap getir-me-yebilir.  
   J. a good book-∅ bring-Neg-Psb  
   ‘John may not bring a good book’ 
   \(\neg \exists\) 

b. John iyi bir kitab-ı getir-me-yebilir.  
   J. a good book-Acc bring-Neg-Psb  
   ‘John may not bring a good book’ 
   \(\exists \neg / \neg \exists\)
(10) Konferans-a Türkçe bilen bir İzlandalı-yı çağıralım.

‘Let us invite a Turkish speaking Icelander to the conference.’
Interim Summary

- Ø-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.
- Ø-indefinites are opaque for animates, opaque or transparent for inanimates; Acc-indefinites are always transparent.
- Acc does not induce existential presupposition.
“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. verb := λx.λy.verb′.xy
    b. verb := λp.λy.∃x. px ∧ verb′.xy
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’), *bazi-si* (‘some’), *hangi-si* (‘which one’) *kimi-si* (‘some’), *hep-si* (‘all’), *(bir) bas¸ka-si* (‘some other’), *di˘ger-i* (‘the other’) and so on.

- Genitive-possessives are predicable.

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 [likes Harry] and [saw].

\[ et \quad e(et) \]
(13) a. Ahmet-e bir gömlek ve şu saat-i al-acığım.
   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-acığım.
   A.-Dat that watch-Acc and a shirt buy-Fut.3sg
   ‘I will buy Ahmet that watch over there and a shirt.’

   Hi a officer and John-Acc seek-Prg
   ‘Hi, I am looking for an officer and John.’

   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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Example</th>
<th>*</th>
<th>Nsp.</th>
<th>Sp.</th>
<th>Both</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>13a: [Indef. &amp; Def.] buy</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13b: [Def. &amp; Indef.] buy</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14a: [Indef. &amp; Def.] seek</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14b: [Def. &amp; Indef.] seek</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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 \textit{invent}-type verbs.

- \textit{‘bir N’} denotes “an instance of kind N”:
  
  \[
  \text{bir} := \lambda k \lambda x. \text{Ins}(x, k) \quad \text{doktor} := \text{doctor} \\
  \text{bir doktor} := \lambda x. \text{Ins}(x, \text{doctor})
  \]
The Proposal

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  \text{bir doktor} & := \lambda x. \text{Ins}(x, \text{doctor})
  \end{align*}
  \]

(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).’
Acc and $\emptyset$

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

$$\text{bir doktor} := \lambda x. \text{Ins}(x, \text{doctor})$$

$$sk^\epsilon_{\lambda x. \text{Ins}(x, \text{doctor})}$$

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

$$\text{bir doktor} := \lambda x. \text{Ins}(x, \text{doctor})$$

$$\text{bir doktor} := \lambda p \lambda y \exists x. \text{Ins}(x, \text{doctor}) \land \text{one'}x \land pxy$$
Obligatory Acc-marking:
- Proper Names;
- Demonstratives;
- Pronouns;
- *kim* (‘who’), but not *ne* (‘what’);
- NPs modified with *-ki* (locative relatives);
- Genitive-possessives, ((non)-relational);
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Turkish Genitive Possessives do not have “kind-modification” readings; *Men’s shoe* is covered by a compound *erkek ayakkabi-si* (‘man shoe-Poss.3sg’)

They are ruled out at *I’ll make an X out of Y.* type of contexts.
(17) a. **Bir sekreter** ar-iyor-um. (opaque)
    a secretary seek-Prog-1sg
    ‘I am looking for a secretary.’

    b. **Bir sekreter-i** ar-iyor-um. (transparent)
    a secretary-Acc seek-Prog-1sg
    ‘I am looking for a secretary.’

(18) a. **Bir kitap** ar-iyor-um. (opaque/transparent)
    a book seek-Prog-1sg
    ‘I am looking for a book.’

    b. **Bir kitab-ı** ar-iyor-um. (transparent)
    a book-Acc seek-Prog-1sg
    ‘I am looking for a book.’
(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.’
(20) a. Every student a method-Acc follow-will

\[ \forall s. M(s, s', spk') \rightarrow \forall x. stu'_{s_0} x \rightarrow follow'_{s}(sk'^{(s,x)}_{\lambda z. Ins_{s_1}'(z, method) \wedge c'_{s_2}}) x \]

b. \[ \forall s. M(s, s', spk') \rightarrow \forall x. stu'_{s_0} x \rightarrow follow'_{s}(sk'^{(s,x)}_{\lambda z. Ins_{s_1}'(z, method) \wedge c'_{s_2}}) x \]

(21) a. Every student a method-Ø follow-will

\[ \forall s. M(s, s', spk') \rightarrow \forall x. stu'_{s_0} x \rightarrow \exists z. Ins(z, method) \wedge follow'_{s} z x \]
Justification
Scope and negation

(22) a. John iyi bir kitab-ı getirmedi. (∃ ¬)
J. a good book-Acc bring-Neg-Pst
‘John didn’t bring a good book’
b. John iyi bir kitab-ı getir-me-yebilir. (∃ ¬/¬ ∃)
J. a good book-Acc bring-Neg-Psb
‘John may not bring a good book’

(23) a. ¬(bring′sk′good′book′john′)
b. ¬(∀s.K(s, s′₀, spk′) → bring′(sk′(s)good′book′s′₀)john′)
c. ¬(∀s.K(s, s′₀, spk′) → bring′(sk′(s)good′book′s′₀)john′)
d. ¬(∀s.K(s, s′₀, spk′) → bring′(sk′(s)good′book′s′₀ ∧ C)john′)
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. Ø may boil down to the difference between generalized Skolem terms and existential quantification over instances of kinds, if such a distinction really exists.


