

Partitivity and case marking in Turkish

Prof. Dr. Klaus von Heusinger & Prof. Dr. Jaklin Kornfilt, University of Stuttgart

The main goal of this paper is to discuss the interaction of partitivity and case marking, primarily differential object marking (DOM) in Turkish. It is generally assumed that DOM is determined by specificity. Enc (1991) used facts based on DOM to support the claim that partitivity is an instance of specificity, or even a stronger claim, namely that specificity equals partitivity. We present instances of partitive constructions with non-specific subset expressions, of two types: 1. Direct object partitives without accusative marking, interpreted as non-specific; 2. Similar partitives without lexical head nouns and with agreement (or other) markers in need of overt accusative; those can be interpreted as nonspecific. The data show that the case suffix expresses specificity, and not partitivity. We further show that the agreement marker can function as a nominal head of a nominal phrase, when a lexical noun is absent to fill the head position. We characterize this semantically as promoting non-nominal phrases to the status of referential ones.