

## **WH-VARIABLES in TURKISH**

This paper will argue that a wh-word in Turkish is not an inherently quantificational element; rather, a wh-word in Turkish behaves like a variable which depends for its interpretation on the operator present in the structure in which it appears. In this way it is similar to the wh-words in languages like Japanese and Chinese discussed by Nishigauchi (1990) and Cheng (1997) respectively. It will be shown that wh-words in Turkish are ambiguously interpreted as the universal quantifier, the negative quantifier, or an interrogative element depending on the context in which they appear. The various readings of the wh-words in Turkish will be argued to be determined by the presence or absence of such operators as the Gen-(eric) operator, the interaction of Gen-operator and the presence of *ki* particle in the C domain. In those cases in which a wh-word is bound by the Gen-operator, it is assigned the negative quantifier interpretation (1). (1) is ambiguous between the question and non-question interpretations in the presence of the Gen-operator represented by the aorist marker {-Ir / -Ar} which is argued to be marker of Genericity and Habituality (Yavaş, 1982). In those cases in which the Gen-operator co-occurs with the negation in the structure, the wh-word is interpreted as the universal quantifier (2). The difference in the non-interrogative readings of the wh-words between (1) and (2) is accounted for assuming the presence of Negation which is argued to be the element which affects the reading of wh-words by Huang (1982) and Jayaseelan (2001) among others. Another context in which a wh-word displays variable property is the structure in which it is bound by the *ki* particle which appears clause finally. The presence of the *ki* particle renders the interrogative reading of the wh-word unavailable. The structure in (3) has neither the Gen-operator nor negation. It is interpreted as a non-interrogative element which is in fact the only reading a wh-word receives when bound by the *ki* particle. We assume that the *ki* particle occupies the C° position and its occurrence in (3) makes the interrogative reading of the wh-word unavailable. We also argue that a wh-word is assigned the interrogative reading when bound by the non-overt Qu(estion) operator which is base-generated in the C-domain as argued by Cheng (1997) and Aoun and Li (1993). We assume that the wh-word in (4) is bound by the covert Qu-operator in the C° position and the wh-word assigned only the interrogative interpretation.

To conclude, this paper will argue that wh-words in Turkish are not inherently interrogative elements. They exhibit variable properties in that their interpretation is determined by external operators present in the structure in which wh-words appear. It will be shown that wh-words are assigned different interpretations when bound by different operators in the structure.

## Data :

(1) Ahmet      **ne-yi**      bil-ir . / ?

Ahmet-NOM what-ACC know-AOR

a. "Ahmet would know nothing."

b. "What would Ahmet know?"

(2) Cem      **kim-e**      inan-ma-z . / ?

Cem-NOM who-DAT believe-NEG-AOR

a. "Cem would believe everyone."

b. "Who would Cem not believe?"

(3) Murat      **kim-i**      tanı-yor      ki.

Murat-NOM who-ACC know-PROG part

a. "Murat knows no one."

b. \* "Who does Murat know?"

(4) Cem      **kim-i**      gör-dü?

Cem-NOM who-ACC see-PAST

"Who did Cem see?"

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