

## GENITIVE EXISTENTIAL SENTENCES IN TURKISH

There are many examples across languages of genitive case as a structural case, e.g. genitive of negation in Russian, genitive subjects of nominalizations in Turkish. However, I will argue that some instances of genitive cases are semantic, not structural, where I understand by semantic case one that correlates strictly with a particular semantic role. The arguments will rest on two kinds of genitive constructions in Turkish: genitives in argument positions, which correspond to DPs like *Sally's lab* in English, and existential sentences of possession, which correspond to English sentences like *Sally has a sister*.

### 1. Argument genitives

In the genitive constructions in argument positions the possessor bears genitive case, and the head agrees with the possessor in person and number (1a-d). Following Kornfilt (1984), it has become customary to assume that nominal agreement assigns genitive case to the subject of the construction. Abney (1987) argues that these structures are DPs, headed by the functional category D which selects an NP complement. But as the examples in (1) show, unlike English, the Turkish head itself can occur with quantifiers, which suggests that there is another, lower DP containing the possessee NP.

### 2. Existential genitives

Existential sentences expressing possession (in a broad and abstract sense) are genitive constructions in Turkish, as in (2a-b), showing genitive case on the subject and nominal agreement.

### 3. Issues

(3a-d) show that existential sentences have ordinary clausal architecture and can take clausal adjuncts, which are impossible in genitive constructions in argument positions (4a-b). The possessor DP typically occurs above the adjunct clauses as in (3). Thus the possessor must have moved into Spec TP, the normal subject position in finite clauses. This is also the position for nominative case, but in existential sentences the subject retains its genitive case and nominative case is not possible. Furthermore, the agreement paradigm is still the nominal paradigm, and not the paradigm that shows up with nominative subjects. Thus there is a mismatch between the nominal properties of the genitive construction, i.e. genitive case and nominal agreement, and its clausal structure.

One could attempt to solve this problem by collapsing existential sentences with nominalized nonfinite clauses in Turkish, which also have subjects in the genitive and show the nominal agreement paradigm. However, existential sentences have much more in common with non-clausal genitive constructions than nominalizations. In nominalizations, the subject carries genitive case regardless of its semantic relations or its theta role, and is thus a typical structural case. In contrast, both existential constructions and non-clausal genitives express the same relation: Possession. In existential sentences it is entailed, and in non-clausal genitives it is presupposed.

### 4. Proposal

I propose an analysis where both non-clausal genitives and genitive existential sentences are projected from the same small clause NP, [<sub>NP</sub>NP<sub>[+loc]</sub> NP]. Genitive case get assigned inside this small clause. In both structures, the genitive *-nin* is a case on the locative NP, but also expresses the binary possession relation, i.e. has a clear semantics. Differences are derived from the functional shells that the lexical categories move into. In non-clausal genitives both NPs move into DPs. In existential sentences, only the locative NP, already carrying genitive case, moves into a DP in the subject position. The second NP does not project into a DP shell. This analysis also accounts for some semantic differences between the two structures. Following Hudson (1988), I assume that specific arguments are DPs and nonspecifics are NPs, and implement this view by assuming that D provides the second linking index. Thus without a D, an NP never receives a linking index and will be nonspecific (cf. Enç 1991). The proposed analysis makes a correct prediction: The non-clausal genitives are always specific and always show up with case. In existential genitives, only the locative argument which has moved into the clause subject position is specific, and the other NP is nonspecific and is thus consistent with the 'Definiteness Effect' in existential sentences. Like all nonspecifics, it remains adjacent to the verb (5a-f), and never shows overt case. The analysis proposed here explains both the commonalities and the differences between the two genitive constructions.

- (1) a. Selim-in otomobil-i mavi.  
-Gen car -3sg blue  
'Selim's car is blue'
- b. Sen-in iki kedi-n hasta.  
you-Gen two cat -2sg sick  
'Two of your cats are sick'
- c. Ben-im bazı arkadaş-lar-ım gel-di. cf. \*my some friends  
I-Gen some friend-pl-1sg arrive-Pst  
'Some of my friends arrived'
- d. Biz-im her arkadaş-ımız bir hediye getir-di. cf. \*our each friend  
we -Gen every friend-1pl a present bring-Pst  
'Each friend of ours brought a present'
- (2) a. Ahmed-in iki otomobil-i var  
-Gen two car-3sg exist  
'Ahmet has two cars' (Literally, 'Ahmet's two cars exist)
- b. Zeyneb-in beceriksiz bir asistan-ı var  
-Gen incompetent a assistant-3sg exist  
'Zeynep has an incompetent assistant'
- (3) a. Ali-nin [Ø grip ol-duğ-u için] çok ağrı-sı var  
-Gen flu be-Nom-3sg because lots pain-3sg exist  
'Ali has lots of pain because he has the flu'
- b. Sen-in [Ø sorumsuz ol-duğ-un için] herkes-e borc-un var  
you-Gen irresponsible be-Nom-2sg because everybody-Dat debt-2sg exist  
'You owe money to everybody because you are irresponsible'
- c. Siz-in [Ø bir hafta-dır antibiyotik al-ma-nız-a rağmen] hâlâ ateş-iniz var  
you-Gen one week-for antibiotics take-Nom-2pl-Dat even+though still fever-2pl exist  
'You (pl) still have a fever, even though you have been taking antibiotics for a week'
- (4) a. \*Ali-nin [Ø grip ol-duğ-u için] çok ağrı-sın-a üzül-dü-m  
-Gen flu be-Nom-3sg because lots pain-3sg-Dat be+sorry-Pst-1sg  
'I was sorry about [Ali's having lots of pain because he had the flu]'
- b. \*Sen-in [Ø sorumsuz ol-duğ-un için] herkes-e borc-un-u bilmiyordum  
you-Gen irresponsible be-Nom-2sg everybody-Dat debt-2sg-Acc didn't know  
'I didn't know about [your debts because you are irresponsible]'
- (5) a. Sara-nın maalesef çok borc-u var  
-Gen unfortunately lots debt-3sg exist  
'Unfortunately, Sara has a lot of debts'
- b. Maalesef çok borcu var Saranın
- c. Saranın çok borcu var maalesef
- d. \*Saranın çok borcu maalesef var
- e. \*Çok borcu Saranın var maalesef
- f. \*Maalesef çok borcu Saranın var

## REFERENCES

- Abney, S. P. 1987. *The English Noun Phrase in its Sentential Aspect*. MIT dissertation.
- Enç, M. 1991. The Semantics of Specificity. *Linguistic Inquiry* 22.
- Kornfilt, J. 1984. *Case Marking, Agreement, and Empty Categories in Turkish*. Harvard dissertation.
- Hudson, W. 1988. Proceedings of WCCFL 7.