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FUNCTIONAL UNIVERSALS AND SOME ASPECTS OF SENTENCE  
TOPIC IN TURKISH

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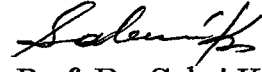
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## ÖZET

Bu çalışmanın amacı, Türkçe basit tümcelerde tümce konusuna bütüncül bir yaklaşım geliştirmektir. Çözümleme, dilbiliminin üç geniş alanı olan sözdizimi, anlambilimi ve edimbilimine gönderme yapmaktadır. Çalışmanın kuramsal dayanaklarını işlevci yaklaşımın dil evrenceleri incelemeleri oluşturmaktadır. Bu anlamda, çalışma belli bir işlevci modelin kuramsal sınırları içerisinde kalmamakta, farklı işlevci yaklaşımların terim ve kavramlarını bütüncül bir biçimde kullanmaktadır.

Giriş bölümünde çalışmanın temel hedefleri ve sınırlamaları belirtilmiştir. Çalışmanın temel önvarsayımları ve bu çalışmanın tümce konusunu kavramını nasıl yorumladığı da bu bölümde verilmiştir.

I. bölümde tümce konusu kavramına yaklaşımlar gözden geçirilmiştir. İlk olarak, işlevci dilbilgisinin genel olarak işlevci yaklaşım içerisindeki yeri tanımlanmış, daha sonra *tümce konusu* kavramının farklı yorumları incelenerek bu yorumlar eleştirel açıdan değerlendirilmiştir. Tümce konusu kavramını açıklamada kullanılan değişik kavram ve terimler arasında “ilişkin olma” kavramının en kapsayıcı olduğu öne sürülmüş ve dillerin tümce konusu olan birimi hangi dilsel yöntemlerle belirttikleri gösterilmiştir. Bu bölümde ayrıca, temel dizim kavramı incelenmiş, temel dizimi oluşturan dil içi ve dil dışı değişik etkenlerin tümce birimlerinin birbirlerini dizimde nasıl etkiledikleri tartışılmıştır.

II. bölüm tümce konusu olan adöbeklerinde görölen temel anlambilimsel özellikler üzerinde yoğunlaşmıştır. Bu anlamda tartışmalar, adöbeklerinin göndergesel değeri ile belirli olmalarını sağlayan dil ögelerinin etkileşimlerine yönelmiştir. Türkçede adöbeklerinin anlam özelliklerini etkileyen biçimsel yapılar ve bunların tümce düzeyindeki yansımaları incelenmiştir. İnceleme, kimi anlam kavramlarını paylaşan yapıların sınıflandırılmasını da beraberinde getirmiştir.

III. bölüm çalışmanın en geniş bölümü olmuş ve bu bölüm tümce konusu kavramı açısından değişik tümce yapılarına bakmıştır. *Bakış Açısı Oluşturma* kavramı temel alınarak, farklı yapıların bu işlevi yerine getirmedeki yeterlilikleri incelenmiş, bunlar arasında gözlemlenen benzerlikler ve farklılıklar betimlenerek, birbirlerinden çok farklı olan kimi yapıların temelde bu işlevi yerine getirebildikleri saptanmıştır. Böylece, işlevci bakış açısından ele alındığında farklı yapıların aynı işlevi yerine getirdikleri gösterilmiştir. Yapısal kavramların işlevci açıdan yorumlanması gerektiği, özellikle geçişlilik kavramının temel bileşenlerinin tümce konusu yorumunu nasıl etkiledikleri betimlenerek gösterilmiştir.

IV. bölüm tümce konusu ile söylem konusu arasındaki olası ilişkiyi incelemeye çalışmıştır. Türkçe söylem birimleri üzerinde, söylemi oluşturan tümcelerin konuları ile söylem konusu arasındaki ilişkinin nasıl kurulduğunu ve nasıl süreklilik gösterdiğini sergileyen bu bölüm, kapsamlı bir söylem çözümlemesi yapmayı amaçlamamıştır.

## ABSTRACT

The aim of this study is to develop a unified approach to the analysis of sentence topic in Turkish simplex sentences. The analysis makes reference to the three broad areas of linguistic research, namely, syntax, semantics, and pragmatics. Functional approach to language universals form the theoretical foundations of the present study. In this respect, the study does not follow the principles of a specific functional grammar model but employs the terms and concepts of different functional approaches to language.

Introduction sets the major goals and limitations of the study. The basic assumptions of the study and the way this study perceives the notion of sentence topic are formulated in this section.

Chapter I reviews the approaches to the notion of topic. It starts with identifying the place of functional grammar within the general framework of functionalism in linguistics. Different conceptions of the notion of topic and their evaluation follow the arguments concerning functional approach to language. This section also includes the strategies involved in the identification of sentence topic and concludes that the notion of topic can best be understood with reference to the notion of “aboutness”. A brief review of the typologies which classify languages in terms of topic marking properties is also presented in this section. This chapter also introduces the notion of basic order and the proposals relating the human cognitive processes with the conditions on the ordering sentential constituents.

Chapter II concerns the semantic properties of the nominals in general and tries to identify the semantic properties which topic NPs are

assumed to be encoding. Here, the arguments generally focus on the intricate relationships between the notions referentiality and definiteness. It evaluates the approaches to definiteness and referentiality of nominals in Turkish and tries to relate these notions with the formal markers available to the grammar of the language. A number of categories emerge from the arguments developed in this section concerning the semantic status of nominals — indefinite specific, anaphorically specific, and the like.

Chapter III constitutes the main body of the study. This chapter presents an analysis of sentence topic in Turkish. Starting from the nonverbal sentences, existentials and substantives, the analysis extends over to intransitives. Since these structures include only a subject NP as the sole grammatical role bearing element, the role of the oblique NPs in these structures gain importance and analysis focuses on their effects on topic-hood. Adopting the notion of ‘perspective setting’, this chapter unifies a number of structurally different constructions under the notion of ‘topic creating structures’. This chapter takes the notion of transitivity from a functional viewpoint and tries to explain different formal markings of grammatical roles in terms of degree of affectedness and individuation.

Chapter IV tries to illustrate the relationship between sentence topic and discourse topic. It displays this relationship through the notions of topic introduction and topic continuity. Since the study is not concerned with discourse analysis, the analysis simply focuses on how discourse topic occurs in sentences of the discourse.

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## INTRODUCTION

The old distinction that has been drawn between the nominal and verbal parts of the sentence has been reinterpreted in the contemporary linguistic research and has been taken to be *given* versus *new* information expressed in a sentence. The current terms used to indicate the status of information in a sentence are *topic* and *comment*. In its basic sense, topic corresponds to the given or presupposed information and comment, to the new.

The functional approach to language takes the sentence as a linguistic construct which structures the information to be expressed in communication. The way in which the information is structured and restructured during the process of communication and the determining factors that ultimately affect this process are the questions to which the functionalists are seeking to find answers. In its basic sense, information structure refers to the encoding of the relative importance of the constituents in a sentence. Again, in its simplest sense, the analysis of information structure refers to the nominals that may occur in a sentence and to the alternative ways of syntactic arrangements of these nominals. Since sentences do not occur in isolation, it is the discourse within which they are located that will set the choices for both the selection and organization of the information content of a particular sentence. Universally, languages encode the information structure through the use of formal devices most of which are available to all languages; however,

both the formal devices themselves and the ways the languages use them for this purpose vary across languages.

It is the aim of the present study to identify those devices that Turkish uses in encoding information structure in a sentence. More specifically, this study will try to provide a unified account to the observable patterns that emerge in relating information structure to the semantic and syntactic structures. To investigate these patterns, it will focus on how the structure of language encodes sentence topic and the properties of available means to fulfill this function. The analysis will follow the principles set by the functional approach to language without specifically adhering to a particular model of functional grammar.

The study of sentence topic in a functional perspective most readily makes reference to three broad areas of linguistic research; *syntax*, *semantics*, and *pragmatics*. The notion of topic is, above all, a pragmatic notion and in this sense it requires reference to be made to the information structure of a sentence. Topic is expressed in any utterance through a nominal expression, i.e., an expression that can refer to some entity, in the most basic sense of the term. Thus the analysis of topic should include fundamental notions and devices of semantic analysis, primarily for the analysis of the factors that determine the semantic content of the nominal expressions and their appropriateness for serving the topic function. Reference is to be made to semantics for other purposes as well in the analysis of sentence topic. Nominal expressions are generally associated with the so-called semantic ( or thematic) roles in the sentences in which they occur. Nominals that serve as sentence topics are at the same time semantic role bearing elements, and in most cases it

is this particular semantic role that the nominal expression bears helps to identify the topic of the sentence. These semantic and pragmatic notions are ultimately expressed through the use of certain formal means in the language and thus, syntax constitutes the third broad area of linguistic research that comes to play a role in the study of sentence topic.

The fact that study of sentence topic should refer to these three areas of research constitutes the major hardship in the study of topic. Those factors that decide on the topichood of a nominal expression in a sentence are very closely interrelated and condition each other reciprocally. Thus, in the majority of the cases it is almost impossible to isolate the determining factors from each other in the analysis of topic. This inevitably brings into the analyses certain unavoidable repetitions, since those determining properties of topics are actually clusters of properties including at least two fundamental notions that define topic in most cases. The notions of **animacy** and **definiteness**, to which we will return in the following pages, for example, are crosslinguistically two important properties that topic noun phrases generally include in their semantic content. The nonexistence of one these properties on the topic noun phrase, if it is ever possible at all, would at least yield to a different semantic interpretation of a sentences, if not to a total ungrammaticality. The point here is that, while definiteness is a “semantic” notion which is expressed through certain formal “syntactic” devices, animacy is a notion which falls out of the realm of linguistics. In other words, animacy concerns the extralinguistic world and languages generally do not mark their nominals for animacy specifically, though many markings can be interpreted as marking of the animacy at the same time. We will see below that among those properties that the topic noun phrases generally

have to fulfill, the two most important ones are forming a cluster that cannot be analyzed separately. More importantly, while one of these properties can be specified within the linguistic system, i.e., can be defined as a property of the formal system of language, the other is a notion that primarily belongs to the extralinguistic world. This, as it seems, is sufficient enough to indicate the importance of the study of topic in a functional perspective and can be taken as a sample case where the function determines the selection of a particular form which is assumed to serve the function expected from it.

Corresponding to these three areas of research, we have three forms of structuring. First, **information structure** is a term given to the relative serialization on linearization of the pragmatically relevant entities in the sentence. The so-called **semantic structure** concerns the distribution of semantic/thematic roles to the nominals in the sentence and identifies the possible associations between the nominals and the set of thematic roles. The third one, **grammatical structure**, generally enters into explanations, especially in the functional universals, in relation to the predication and the assignment of grammatical roles to the nominals. In very a simplistic manner, we can say that entities which belong to all these three structures are interrelated and that certain crosslinguistically valid patterns emerge from their interaction. In other words, languages of the world display similar tendencies when they interrelate the structures and units of these structures. In passing, we can state that the notion of topic belongs to information structure and crosslinguistically, in the unmarked order, languages generally identify topic with **agent**, a notion which belongs to the semantic structure. Consequently, since agents are generally subjects in the sentences, grammatical structures are

ultimately tied to the semantic and pragmatic structures. However, linguistic facts are not as easy as they are presented above.

Topic, then, is a notion which stands at the crossroads in between pragmatics, semantics, and syntax. This, inevitably, makes it a very hard task for anyone, if not impossible, who attempts to derive a unified definition or conceptualization of topic. For this reason, the differences between the definitions of topic proposed by functional linguists are conceptual rather than terminological. In the following section we will present the different approaches and conceptualization of the notion of topic.

As has been stated before, this study will not adhere itself to any method of analysis provided by a single theory of functional grammar. Actually, what is generally referred to as functional approach to language includes a number of different yet related approaches. The concepts that will guide our analysis will be those that are generally used in the identification and explanation of so-called functional universals.

Although the interest in the study of language universals is not new, the current usage of the term language universals is generally understood within the frame set by the Joseph Greenberg in the early 1960s.<sup>1</sup> The recent years has seen an increase in the interest in universals and linguists of all contentions, formalist and functionalist alike, conducted many comparative and contrastive studies to test the validity of their proposals concerning the linguistic structure. This move has extended the linguistic research to cover the “exotic” languages and increased our knowledge of language. Today we have more typologies than we had

before, and it seems that the more the linguists study languages the more typologies we will have.

The functional approach to language universals follows the basics of functionalism in general. Functionalism tries to explain language structure in terms of language function and the idea that governs the research is that the function of language is universal across cultures since language is the general-purpose communication device. Thus, although the patterns that are observed crosslinguistically constitute a coherent set of structures that every theory of grammar refers to, the functionalist approach interprets these structures as the adaptation of grammar to the language function.

Although there is no one coherent methodology in the study of functional universals, as Croft (1990:12) puts it, through the works of many functionally oriented linguists on language universals emerge certain guidelines. According to a somewhat standardized research strategy for the typological study of some grammatical phenomenon: “ (1) determine the particular semantic(-pragmatic) structure or situation type that one is interested in studying; (2) examine the morphosyntactic construction(s) used to express that situation type; and (3) search for dependencies between the construction(s) used for that situation and other linguistic factors — other structural features, other external functions expressed by the construction in question or both.”

Concerning (1), as we have indicated before, we are interested in studying the sentence topic in Turkish. Thus sentence topic will be the particular semantic-pragmatic structure for which this study will try to provide an explanation. Concerning (2) we will try to investigate basically

two issues. First, the study will refer to arguments concerning the aspects of the semantic content of the nominals in Turkish. In this respect, we will analyze those grammatical processes that effect NP's referentiality, definiteness, specificity, uniqueness and so on. The arguments concerning these issues will extend over to the major properties of Turkish grammar. It will be shown that many of the properties of NP's semantic content are closely associated with the word order, article system and case marking properties of Turkish. Second, we will try to provide a unified account of sentence topic by referring to such notions as grammatical roles, semantics roles and the aspects of predication as well as referring to the function of case marking and agreement. For this purpose, we will try to illustrate the factors that are involved in topic interpretation in intransitives, transitives and ditransitives and try to develop some generalizations with reference to the interaction between grammatical roles, semantic roles and case marking. Concerning (3) we will try to illustrate that some of the structures that are studied in themselves in Turkish grammars can be taken as topic creating structures in the sense that they are setting a new perspective in the interpretation of sentences. Here again, we will see that word order and case marking will figure out as the most important formal devices in encoding sentence topic in Turkish.

In addition to the conventional parameters of word order universals we will also refer to the so-called linearization hierarchies that have gained popularity in recent years. The hierarchies proposed by different linguists aim at capturing the generalizations observed in languages where languages display preferences for placing constituents with the same functional role in the same structural position. We shall show that



most of the restrictions imposed on the structuring of sentential constituents can be explained by referring to the content that these hierarchies incorporate. It has been argued that the characteristics of order represented in the linearization hierarchies are direct reflections of human cognitive and processing strategies. We should note that although there are a number of different hierarchies in the current literature, no one hierarchy is determined by a single feature. As we have indicated before, for example, animacy hierarchy encodes not only the feature of animacy but also definiteness or vice versa. In other words, if a noun phrase appears high in the definiteness hierarchy it follows that it will also rank high in the animacy hierarchy.

The final methodological foundation of this study will be the notion of transitivity as it is defined by Hopper and Thompson (1980). In their approach, it is proposed that the notion of transitivity has universally predictable consequences in the grammars of languages and they argue that the defining properties of transitivity are discourse-dependent. They propose ten prototypical transitivity features in the analysis of a structure of a clause and we will display to what extent these features will be helpful in determining the basic properties of a transitive clause in Turkish.<sup>2</sup>

We have already identified in what sense the term information structure will be used in this study and have indicated that the study will limit itself to the analysis of sentence topic, disregarding the structuring of comment. Coming back to grammatical structure, we will refer to three canonical grammatical roles, namely subject, object and indirect object. The way we will use these terms will be clarified in the following chapter,



however, it should be indicated that these terms will not be used in the sense that they are defined by a particular theory of grammar. Grammatical relations will enter into analysis only as formal devices for encoding information structure and will not be defined in any other meaning.

As for the semantic or thematic roles we will again refer to these roles only in the context of topic interpretation. The arguments centering around the semantic roles are still continuing in the current linguistic studies and in at least two points a settlement is yet to be established. The first point concerns the number of semantic roles and the second the explanation of the manner of assignment of semantic roles to the noun phrases. Despite these controversies surrounding the semantic roles and different functions assigned to them, there is at least some consensus on the more “central” roles, for example, almost everybody interpret the Agent role in a similar manner. The way we will use the semantic roles will have no specific meaning and as with the grammatical roles, we will not use such roles in the sense as they are defined by a particular theory. There is some justification in using semantic roles in a rather free manner: since they constitute the intuitive side of the linguistic knowledge, and since hardly anyone can define a unified content for each semantic role, recent studies propose an alternative way to overcome the irregularities that most frequently arise in assigning a semantic role to an NP. In the formal theories of grammar like Government and Binding theory, for example, the semantic role of the subject NP with the predicate *open* is not defined as Agent but by “opener” role; the functional universal grammar of Foley and van Valin propose another strategy by combining different semantic roles into two “super” roles of **actor** and **undergoer**, and

so on. Thus, in accordance with the recent trends we will use the semantic roles in our analysis quite freely without providing further justification. This does not mean, however, that we will use semantic roles in an unbounded way. On the contrary, we will limit our use of these roles as they are understood “publicly.”

Having presented the framework within which this study will be located, we will now turn to our hypotheses concerning the sentence topic in Turkish. The following is a list of basic proposals of the study:

1. Only those NPs which are selected by the verb and thus bear a grammatical relation to the verb can be topic in a Turkish sentence.
2. The **oblique context** created by the intransitive verb and the relative ordering of oblique NPs in intransitive clauses may help to develop a unified account of the behavior of such verbs in Turkish. Thus depending on the use of a particular oblique NP with an intransitive verb may yield different interpretations.
3. The status of dative requires special treatment in Turkish. Along the lines suggested by the current studies, dative can be taken both as a semantic case and a grammatical case. This dual function of dative will reflect itself in topic interpretation in Turkish. Except those NPs that are dative marked and express recipient and beneficiary roles, all other oblique NPs will be taken to serve as **frame-setting**

elements and even when they are moved to sentence-initial position, they will not be interpreted as sentence topic. This exclusion will also be justified in the study by referring to notions such as referentiality, definiteness, specificity, and animacy. Dative marked NPs in the so-called *oblique transitives* can also function as sentence topics in Turkish.

4. In transitive clauses, along the lines suggested by Hopper and Thompson (1980), Turkish distinguishes between **partial** and **full** affectedness of the object NPs. This is well indicated by case marking of object NPs through either by accusative or by ablative case in the partitive sense. We will also argue that marking of an object NP with a particular case has impact on its possible accessibility to the topic position.
5. In its broadest sense, we will interpret topicalization as a **perspective setting and/or orientation changing process**. When viewed from this perspective, the processes which include subject incorporation and passivization can be taken as topic creating structures.

In a number of respects, this study approaches to the notion of sentence topic in a different manner than those of the two previous extensive studies on sentence topic in Turkish. It differs from the approach adopted by Erguvanlı (1984) in primarily two respects: first, structures that are analyzed separately in Erguvanlı's study are combined together to provide a more unified account of sentence topic in Turkish. The structures that Erguvanlı discusses primarily to indicate

the function of word order as a definitivizing device will be taken here as the reflection of a more general process, namely, *perspective setting*. Second, this study imposes a more coherent set of restrictions on the number of NPs that can be topic in a sentence by making explicit reference to the notion of predication and grammatical roles. Thus, as opposed to Erguvanlı's loosely imposed restriction which allows *any* NP with appropriate semantic properties to appear in the topic position, we will argue that they will not receive topic interpretation even though they may occur in the sentence-initial position. In other words, from (1) above, we will claim that NPs which do not bear a grammatical relation to the verb may appear to the left of the "topic" and function as frame-setting elements, rather than sentence topic.

Erkü (1983), as opposed to Erguvanlı's study, concerned primarily with the topic in Turkish. Again from the perspective we are developing in this study, our evaluation for Erguvanlı's study holds for Erkü's study as well. However, Erkü differs from Erguvanlı in some respects; for example, she tries to define a discourse component and proposes a set of conditions on topichood in Turkish from pragmatic and semantic point of view.

In sum, study of sentence topic, in the broadest sense, is the study of human's preferences in a given communicative context. Most of the patterns emerging in the interaction of form and function in human communication can be taken as indications of this fact. For example, as it is reflected in most of the hierarchies that humans commonly talk about themselves or their own activities as the person hierarchy indicates, i.e., first person ranks above all others. Again, most frequently, the agentive role is preserved for humans, such that whenever the semantic role of the

subject, i.e., topic in the unmarked case, is changed the restrictions on the rest of the sentence increase. The notion of animacy also plays an important role together with definiteness in topicalization processes that the restrictions on inanimate noun phrases are more strict than the animate ones. Since animacy and definiteness increase the individuation on an entity, such entity would encounter less objection from the topic position and would probably constitute a topic that human can talk “about ” in a discourse situation. These suggest that the analysis of sentence topic requires a functional approach to language given that most of the preferences stated above are observable crosslinguistically.



## Notes

<sup>1</sup> Kefer and Auwera (1992) review the idea of language universal from the earlier times to the present.

<sup>2</sup> The said study has been used previously in the analysis of clause structure in Turkish. Among those analyses that refer to this article, Aksu-Koç (1986) and Zeyrek (1990) use the content of the approach more comprehensively than others.



## **CHAPTER I**

### **FUNCTIONAL APPROACH TO LANGUAGE AND TOPIC**

#### **I.0. Functional Approach to Language**

In this section, we will review the basic assumptions of the functional approach to language. We will first refer to different approaches to language function under this broad title and then illustrate some basic principles that govern the so-called functional grammars. This section will also include the different approaches to the notion of topic in general and sentence topic in particular. A reference will also be made to functional approaches to language universals which are developing rapidly in the recent years. It will become clear that the definition of topic involves complexities mainly due to the meanings and functions attributed to this notion.

### **1.1. Functionalism in Linguistics**

The functional approach or functionalism is a cover term which includes studies that try to identify the role and the function of language in different human contexts. Besides these broader fields of study, within functional approach we also have more “formally” oriented studies, so to speak. The titles such as Functional Grammar or Functional Syntax designate those studies which attempt to specify the regularities and patterns that emerge from the form-function interaction.

In its essentials, the functional approach views language as a means of communication and tries to find out the social and cognitive factors involved in the process of human interaction through the medium of language. As such, functional approach includes a number of research fields each emphasizing different functions that language is said to be serving. The study of social, cultural and cognitive factors constitute the broadest research field in functional approach and many such studies are subsumed under the term discourse analysis in recent years.

Broadly speaking, there are some research areas where the primary aim is to identify the functions of language in establishing and conducting a variety of social and interactional patterns in human societies. On the other hand, there are other areas of research where the aim is to identify how language is used to fulfill a specified communicative function. For the former group of studies we may count more anthropologically and ethnographically motivated studies, and for the latter we count such studies which focus on particular uses of language in the written or spoken



medium. This distinction, in a way, corresponds to the **interactional** and **transactional** functions of Brown and Yule (1983).

## 1.2. Functional Grammar

The term functional grammar, although it appears to be a more restrictive term, similar to the term functional approach, includes a variety of theories. Despite their differences, the functional theories share three fundamental assumptions : (i) the function of language is communication; (ii) grammatical form is derivable from extragrammatical principles, and (iii) communicative function explains linguistic form (Newmeyer, 1983). Underlying these assumptions is the understanding that the formally structured internal organization of language is a "... complex response to its ecological setting — the communicative and interactional functions which it serves, and the full cognitive, social, and physiological properties of the human user." (Thompson, 1992:37). Thus the forms of language are structured as they are simply to serve for the communicative needs of humans.

It is possible to list a number of approaches as the historical predecessors of the functionalist view; however, most of the terms that contemporary functional grammars use in their analyses are first introduced into the literature by the Prague School scholars. These include a number of terms ranging from pragmatic notions such as 'theme' to the notions concerning the overall system of language such as 'markedness'. What we call today as *Information Flow* in referring to the

ordering and reordering of the so-called information units in accordance with their relative salience in a sentence is also deriving from the Prague School notion of *Functional Sentence Perspective*.

The concepts first defined and introduced into the functional research by the Prague Scholars are reinterpreted in the current works, and the ways in which these concepts are reinterpreted give us the different theories of functional grammar<sup>1</sup>. Nichols (1984) gives a taxonomy of model of functional grammars on the basis of criteria that these theories refer to in their analyses. According to the classification provided in Nichols, functional grammars attribute differing senses to the notion of *function* and *functional*. Nichols roughly presents a 3-item classification: (1) major senses of function, (2) scales of functional statements, (3) analysis and theories and the directionality of functional approaches.

In terms of (1) there are five different senses attributed to the notion of function, or the term function is associated with five different notions. The first one, *function/interdependence* indicates interrelations of grammatical phenomena and functional explanations. The second, *function/purpose* is the purposive use of language which constitutes one or more speech acts or other goals of communication. The third, *function/context* is the indexical meaning of language which shows context of speech act and has two types: “function/event categories” index of the roles of participants in a speech act and “function/text” categories with accounts for textuality and cohesion of a text in the discourse organization and the progression of narration, etc. Fourth, *function/relation* is the relation of structural elements to and within

higher order structural units. Fifth, *function/meaning* includes the pragmatics of purpose and context. In general it indicates more than one function with an admixture of categorical semantics: for instance, function/purpose and function/context of particles in a discourse.

Scales of functional statements or theories consist of conservative, moderate and extreme types. The *conservative* type emphasizes the inadequacy of strict formalism or structuralism without suggesting a new analysis of structure. On the other hand, the *moderate* type not only criticizes the means of strict formalism but also proposes a functional analysis of the structures. Finally, the *extreme* functionalism denies the reality of structure claiming that linguistic rules are based on function.

*Directionality*, as the last criteria so far, searches for the direction of generalizations made by various functional approaches; some favour form-to-function generalizations while others prefer the function-to-form ones.

The major representative of the conservative functionalists is Kuno (1987); Hopper and Thompson (1980), and Dik (1989) are scholars from the moderates camp, and finally, Givón (1983) is the representative of the extremists. Since it is not our aim to introduce any form of evaluative measure here, we find it sufficient to note that, as in the case of functional approach, the term functional grammar covers approaches that differ from each other primarily on the basis of the degree of formalism that they allow in their explanations.

The analysis that is presented in this study does not pursue any specific methodology of any particular theory of functional grammar.

However, it will be clear that the works of the above stated scholars will become relevant for this study as we proceed. The prototypical transitivity parameters of Hopper and Thomspon will be helpful in our analysis; we will illustrate the consequences of individuation and degree of affectedness of entities in a transitive clause in topic interpretation. We will refer to Givón's notion of topic continuity in following the changes in the coding of the topic in the discourse — how it is introduced, established, and reestablished in the discourse. Dik's **LIPOC** (*Language Independent Preferred Order of Constituents*), tries to develop a unified account for the occurrence of information bearing elements in specified syntactic positions invariably. Although it is argued that this notion fails in the analysis of free word order languages, we will indicate that there is some explanatory merit in this notion. Dik's Functional Grammar will also enter into our analysis through his other terms like, *perspective setting* and *pragmatic function assignment*. Thus, if not eclectic, the analysis in this study is “moderate” in the sense of Nichols (1984).

Preserving their individual identities under the term *functional grammar*, each theory in one way or another assigns function to the formal structure. For a functionalist, the structure of a sentence is a reflection of the information structure it encodes, if we limit ourselves to the sentence as a formal unit. It is assumed that when people use language, this occurs usually to convey information; and depending on the contextual features of the discourse, each sentence is structured so as to reflect the difference between what is new “information” and what is “old” information. This so-called *information asymmetry* is expressed universally and the way information is packaged in natural language indicates the “... sender's hypotheses about the receiver's assumptions and beliefs and strategies”

(Prince, 1981:224). Information, when used as such, refers to any ideational content, and sentence structure includes those formal means of distinguishing between “new” and “old” information. In this context, topic generally represents the “old” information in a sentence.

### 1.3. Topic : Approaches and Definitions

The notion of topic perhaps constitutes a special case both in terms of the controversies around the definitions and the variety of notions that it is used to designate. The term comes from Greek *topos*, meaning a ‘place’ or ‘commonplace’. The adjectival form *topika* also means ‘commonplace things’. Etymologically, the term thus expresses the notion of familiarity, similar to the sense that it is used today. Maybe because of this “commonplace” quality that the term topic finds different places of usage and, it appears that everybody has something to say about topic.

The topical element is identified in at least seven different levels of linguistic analysis. Beaugrande (1992:244) gives the following list:

- a. *Phonology* : A topic can be indicated in the intonation pattern of a tone group, as by a lower or falling tone.
- b. *Morphology* : A language may have inflections or particles for demarcating the topical, such as definite articles.

c. *Syntax*: Many languages indicate the topical through clause organization, for example, by placing it before the nontopical.

d. *Lexicon* : The organization of and access to entries in a lexicon is influenced by topical relations, such as 'lexical cohesion' among entries with related meanings.

e. *Semantic* : A topic is a content or proposition; for example, one on a 'global' level of discourse meaning.

f. *Pragmatics* : Topicality depends on what the speaker and the hearer can be presumed to know already in a given discourse situation.

g. *Stylistics* : Certain strategies for foregrounding and backgrounding topics can be identified with particular styles, such a technical style designed for experts in a domain of discourse.

The above list of levels of linguistic analysis point to the fact that language uses a number of available means for the identification of topic. This does not mean, however, topic can be identified with ease in a given communicative context. We will see below that the notion has been approached from a variety of points and each conception contributed to confusion or vagueness that centers around the term today. We will now look at the different definitions of topic and display that differences are conceptual rather than terminological.

### 1. 3. 1. Topic : A Multiplex Concept

A number of metaphors are associated with the notion of topic in linguistic research. The existence of various definitions and the conceptual distances between these definitions and approaches make it hard for anyone to evaluate each and every definition of topic. To make the scene more transparent, a number of categorizations have been made in the literature.<sup>2</sup> The immediate distinction concerns the approaches where the notion is defined in a broad or narrow sense, where broad and narrow is generally associated with the linguistic unit.

In the narrow sense, the notion topic is related to sentence and its grammatical and semantic frame; in its broader sense, topic goes over the boundaries of sentence and is associated with another unit, namely the discourse. The result is the formulation of sentence topic (S-topic) or discourse topic (D-topic). Thus, the first major demarcation line is drawn in the content of the term in terms of the unit of analysis.

Topic is one of the least well understood concept in linguistics, primarily due to the absence of uniformity in its terminology. There are differences of approaches to the categoriality of the term topic, and there are also structural, notional and/or ontological differences found in the definition of topic. Terminologically, there has not been a consensus on the use of notion topic. Together with *topic* the terms (cf. Chomsky 1965; Hockett 1958, Lyons 1968, Reinhart 1981, Kuno 1972, Strawson 1971) *theme* (cf. Danes 1974, Halliday 1967, Kuno 1972) or *psychological subject* (cf. Halliday 1967), are used widely.



In the *categoriality* of the term, bicategorical pairs of topic-comment is used. Topic is defined mostly by referring to the notion of *aboutness*; comment is defined in term of *informational status*, or being the most prominent information in a sentence (Dik 1978; 989).

In other words, depending on the unit of discourse on the basis of *structural* criteria, for different discourse units the term topic is used in different senses. For instance, Givón (1983) uses the term *topic* to denote the S-topic and the *theme* to denote the topic of a paragraph for the sake of the ease of explanation.

The variation in the pair of topic-theme is favored to name the other categorial differences as well. Chafe (1976), for example, uses these terms to explain specific structural facts of *topic-prominent* languages. In this use, the theme is “ the frame within which the sentence holds ”, and topic “ sets a spatial, temporal or individual framework within which the main predication holds.” Dik (1978;1989) also draws distinctions between the terms topic and theme, however, his distinctions are kept within clause boundaries. He identifies the clause internal pragmatic functions as *topic* and *focus* and clause external pragmatic functions as *theme* and *tail* and these are ultimately decided within the discourse context.

### 1.3.2. Topic : Types

This confusion in describing topic can be avoided or lessened if one could distinguish the description from the criterion in discussing topic and



theme. Apart from these methodological considerations, Schiffrin (1992:173-4) suggests two main reasons for the lack of unity in the definitions of topic: (1) topic pertains to different aspects of communication process (message, code, speaker, interaction) as its defining criteria; (2) topic is realized or encoded at different linguistic levels (entity, proposition, text, discourse) — as given above in our introduction. These two sources of differences combine to produce five types of topic which can be classified under one of our broad categories as being an S-topic and/or D-topic:

- (1) *entity topic* [S-topic]
- (2) *proposition topic* [between S-topic and D-topic]
- (3) *text topic* [D-topic]
- (4) *speaker topic* [D-topic]
- (5) *interactive topic* [D-topic]

**Entity topic** can be the person, object, idea, and so on; that is what a message (at the level of proposition which is encoded in a sentence) is about. Entity topics have both semantic and syntactic manifestations : semantically, they are often agents; syntactically, they are often grammaticalized as clause subjects, marked morphologically, or found in sentence initial position.

**Propositional topics** are slightly larger parts of messages which are encoded at the clause or sentence level as a propositional content ( e.g. Tomlin's (1985), backgrounded and foregrounded events). Just as entity topics have been noted to show a tendency toward occurring in sentence-initial position, propositional topics are also said to be preceding their comments.

**Text topics** are still larger units as general frameworks which underlie an entire text (e.g. Dijk (1977) ), comparable in some ways to a title of a story. Although a text topic might be reflected in word(s) and sentences and sequential relationships in the discourse, it might not always be directly encoded through the discourse itself. Rather, text topics may be semantically and/ or structurally derivable in some way, such that everything in the discourse could then be seen as (directly or indirectly) about the text topic.

The above three definitions of topic take the **message** as a central unit such that each definition focuses on a different level of the message, i.e., entity, proposition, and text. Consequently, each is associated with a different level of linguistic structure. The last two of the definitions of topic, however, focus on an aspect of communication rather than the message. That is, they focus on the speaker, or on the interaction between speaker and hearer.

**Speaker topic** refers to “ what I think we are talking about” (Brown and Yule 1983). **Interactive topic**, on the other hand, is not just subjective, but intersubjective, and it is built up through speakers' interactions with one another. (Keenan and Schieffelin 1976)

Having specified some of the problems concerning the conceptualization of topic, in what follows we would like to limit ourselves to detect the properties of the S-topic as being an entity topic.

#### **1. 4. Sentence Topic**

The term sentence topic seems to be narrowing the field within which the notion of topic can be defined more properly. However, as we will see below, in most cases, the definition of sentence topic goes beyond the sentence boundaries, not only defined in its relation to larger units such as discourse, but also with reference to notions concerning psychological processing in communication. Here we will draw a distinction between strategies in the identification of sentence topic; there are those who interpret the notion of **aboutness** in a more context dependent manner and there are others who interpret notion through more reference to formal means of expression.

##### **1. 4. 1. Identification of S-topic: Aboutness**

The S-topic is formally defined as an entity in the world that sentence S is about. The phrase “ sentence S is about” is interpreted differently and sometimes it is not the S but a part of the S is taken to be establishing “aboutness”.

For Danes (1974:107), it is the **topic-comment** structure which establishes the aboutness, and topic-comment structure is the unit which “ ... frames each clause into the form of a message about one of its constituents.” This definition asserts that sentence aboutness is assumed to be a two place relation between a sentence **S** and an entity **e** that **S** is about. Thus, the term topic, in this frame is associated with **e**.

There are others who define S-topic aboutness as *a part of a sentence* which is referring to an entity in the world the **S** is about (Hornby 1971). In this sense, S-topic aboutness is assumed to be a two place relation between an **S** and the extension /**s**/ of a structural element **s** in **S** . Thus, in this sense, sentence topic is defined with the structural element in the **S**.<sup>3</sup>

Davison (1984 : 805-6), on the other hand, relates the notion of aboutness to a single NP in a sentence, i.e., the sentence-topic NP. In her terms, “ A sentence is a linguistic object and so, if a sub-constituent of it is a topic ... Sentence topic is the linguistic constituent of a sentence, which the sentence is about; more particularly it refers to a constituent of the category NP ... the most clearly observed and objectively definable linguistic features of topics are those associated with NPs.”

In all of the above statements, sentence aboutness is taken as a two place relation between an **S** and the structure element **s**. Only Davison's definition expresses with what linguistic unit in a sentence the notion of aboutness can be associated, or in other words, can serve the sentence-topic function.

Reinhart (1981:53) develops yet another approach to juxtaposition of sentence topic and the notion of aboutness. She discusses the notion of S-topic on pragmatic grounds, more properly takes the notion where linguistics proper and pragmatics meet:

Sentence topic is a pragmatic phenomenon which is specifically linguistic: Only sentences can have a sentence topic, and what the topic of a given sentence is is determined both by its context of utterance and by its linguistic structure. While the relation of pragmatic aboutness defines sentence topic, it may also be related to non-linguistic aspects of human interaction, it is severely restricted by the independent linguistic properties of the language whose sentence topics we are considering.

It thus appears that the notion of aboutness is somehow associated with a formal linguistic unit in a sentence. However, the way the notion aboutness is interpreted requires further comment, i.e., whether aboutness is to be interpreted within the boundaries of a single sentence or it should go beyond the sentence level to cover the other factors involved in the communication process. In this respect, both Gundel (1988) and Dik (1978) develop topic definitions which refer to the notion of pragmatic aboutness. For Gundel (1988:210) a topic is:

An entity, E, is the topic of a sentence, S, iff in using S the speaker intends to increase the addressee's knowledge about, request information about, or otherwise get the addressee to act with respect to E.

Dik (1978:130) defines topic through its function:

A constituent with Topic function presents the entity 'about' which the Predication predicates something in the given setting.

These two definitions emphasize the notion of aboutness as the defining feature of the topic and they follow Reinhart's conception. Note that both definitions limit the notion of topic to a sentence level analysis with little reference to broader units like discourse or text.

#### **1. 4. 2. Identification of S-topic: Syntactic Tests**

To identify the sentence topic, a group of tests has been developed. The tests are designed to take as an input a topic-bearing sentence and to give as an output a specification of the topic of that sentence (van Kuppevelt 1994: 4631). However, this defines the ideal situation and in literature, for many cases, these tests are used more often to determine whether some constituent has topic function than to determine the specifications of the topic. If the constituent maintains this function it is the S-topic. Following are the four well known tests which are generally designed for English. The validity of these tests for other languages requires some comment. We will see below that application of "about context" test to Turkish for example, as Erkü (1983) does, may derive quite unnatural sentences in Turkish.

- (1) Fronting test (Kuno 1972; Lakoff 1971)
- (2) the "about"-context test (Reinhart 1981)
- (3) the "about"-question test (Gundel 1977)
- (4) the question test (Sgall et.al. 1973;1986)

The first three tests generally filter out NPs as structural units in terms of their topichood, however, only (4) reverses the option of topichood to other structural units than NPs, i.e., clauses or sentences.

*Fronting test:* Structures with linguistically marked topic positions — left-dislocation, topicalization, etc. — are used as testing devices. If a structurally unmarked sentence containing an NP1 ( $S < NP1 >$ ) can be acceptably paraphrased due to the scheme,

|            |   |                  |
|------------|---|------------------|
| As for     |   |                  |
| Concerning | } | NP1, $S < NP1 >$ |
| About      |   |                  |

NP1 counts as the topic of the original sentence.

Fronting test should be used carefully since the occurrences of left dislocation and topicalization are restricted in discourse. Due to this, one could have inappropriate results when he places this fronted sentences in a discourse context.

*"About"-context test:* A structurally unmarked sentence  $S < NP1 >$  is paraphrased by continuing the sentence in agreement with a scheme like "He said about / of NP1 that  $S < NP1 >$ . A sentence can be paraphrased that way only if the NP1 following about can be its topic. Doing this, some elements are added to the original sentence that force it to be about what

is presented by NP1. Without this addition, the original sentence may be about a different topic. As a result, the extended sentence is not the adequate paraphrase of the original sentence.

*“About” -question test:* The topic-bearing sentence  $S < NP1 >$  is placed in a context of a specific question, “what about NP1?” . According to this test, if  $S < NP1 >$  is about NP1, then  $S < NP1 >$  is an acceptable answer to the about-question.

Fronting and about-context tests can be further grouped under the rubric of “tests by paraphrase” (Smith 1991). Many scholars are skeptical about these two tests mainly for two reasons: first, these tests generally yield unnatural sentences, and second, paraphrases are heavily influenced with intuitive judgments where people derive different NPs as topic from the same structure.

*Question test* is the most common one since it involves Question-Answer pairs which build up a minicontext for the occurrences of sentences. The set of Wh-questions searches the topic-comment part of a topic bearing sentence.

The presupposed constituent in Wh-question is the topic and the proposition that is questioned belongs to the comment part. In other words, the full answer to a wh-question concerning a given referent is the topic, the questioned entity or the proposition is the comment of the sentence. Note that the topic NP will always be familiar to the participants of the discourse and should be relevant in the question context.

1. What did Allison break? [presupposed: Allison (did something)]



Allison                broke a vase.

Presupp                focus

Topic                    comment

Allison is the topic of the sentence since it is the given referent in the question context; *a vase* is the focus because it is the questioned entity.

What about the situation with general questions such as *what happened?* or *what is new?* There is not a presupposed topic with this questions so the answers of such questions belong to the comment part of the sentence. The whole message is a new information for the interlocutors.

2. (a) What                happened?

(b) Allison                broke a vase.

Such answers are called as topicless sentences, or all new predicates (Sgall et.al. 1986; Dik 1989).

There are certain problems with the application of Q-A tests which are discussed extensively in Hajicova (1984) and Smith (1991). First of all, the test can only be applied to positive declarative sentences. Negative, interrogative and other sentence types must be changed into declaratives to be analyzed. This process is relatively easy for negative assertion but no so for sentences in question. Secondly, Q-A test becomes insufficient in the identification of topic NP in three place predicate sentences. Observe the examples:

3. (a) Who gave the teapot to Jill?

(b) John gave the teapot/it to Jill/her.

4. (a) What did Jill put in the bedroom?

(b) Jill/she put the dress in the bedroom/there.

Ignoring the effect of intonation, the sentences can be either about a single argument or both of the presupposed direct objects or prepositional objects. Although the answer of the three place predicate questions involves more than one coreferential NP, there is nothing in the question structure that signals what a question is about. (3)a may be about *teapot*, *Jill* or neither. Similarly (4)b can be the neutral answer of "What happened?" as indicated by Kuno (1972).

A last word on Q-A test is that "... the search question has a structural focus — the *wh*-constituent. However the presupposed material is not organized around a particular NP" (Smith 1991:557).

5. (a) Who sent the antique table?

(b) Mary sent it / the antique table.

Topic: the antique table

6. (a) What did Mary send?

(b) She/Mary sent the antique table.

Topic: Mary

Problems and complications occurring with all kinds of tests discussed so far force linguists to search for other operational characterizations for the identification of S-topic. These characterizations can be either context independent or context dependent but their main aim is to propose universal and objective criterion to illuminate the notion of S-topic and its relation with the higher units in languages.

#### 1. 4. 3. Identification of S-Topic: Formal Markers

The users of some languages of the world have little difficulty in identifying the topic of a sentence in their languages. A particle or a case marker in these languages attaches to an NP in the sentence and identifies that NP as the sentence topic. In other words, sentences contain an additional overtly expressed linguistic unit which serves to mark the topic of a sentence. Depending on a variety of conditions, which are irrelevant for our purposes, the so-called topic markers may attach to NPs which are not bearing a grammatical role to the predicate of the sentence in which they occur and even an adverbial may be marked for topic. **Ka** of Korean, **wa** of Japanese and **ang** of Tagalog are defined as such markers in these languages.

The existence of formal topic markers in some languages and nonexistence in some others is a significant observation for the typologists or for those who are interested in functional approach to language

universals. If it is the case that any structural unit of language can be transformed into a parameter for the generalizations across languages, then, topic markers would easily count as possible candidates for such generalizations. The markers that we mentioned above are clearly morphological markers and a natural typological class may be proposed simply from the existence of such markers in languages. Thus, typologically we may say that there are languages which mark their sentence topics morphologically, and there are languages which do not. Since notion of topic distinguishes between old and new information in a sentence and since this distinction is required universally in all languages, at least as a communicative need, then languages other than those which mark their sentence topic morphologically, should include in their system some other formal means of topic marking.

Interest in the search of a crosslinguistically available structural means of topic marking, given the idea that all languages are sensitive to the distinction between topic and comment, resulted in taxonomies concerning the marking of information structure. Here we will refer to two such taxonomies proposed by Li and Thompson (1976) and Gundel (1988). Actually, what we call today as functional universals derive from the attempts directed towards the specification of universally valid strategies for marking the topic-comment structure.

The study of language universals were primarily carried over the structural properties of languages and little attention was paid to the ways in which languages encode their information structure or distribute the units of information structure in a sentence. Especially, the advent of more functionally oriented theories of grammar and publication of the

grammars of the least studied languages in the recent years, provided foundations for the functional approaches to language universals. As the studies expanded to cover more languages, it became clear that some languages behave quite differently in terms of structuring or serialization of the information content of their sentences. Li and Thompson, for example indicated that the basic sentence in some languages is not organized along the subject-predicate relations as in the case of many Indo-European languages and argued that it is the topic-comment relation that determines the basic sentence structure. In these languages, where topic-comment relation figures as the defining relation of the sentence structure, topic element has properties that are not found in the subjects <sup>4</sup>.

#### **1.4.3.1. Topic-Comment vs. Subject-Predicate: Morphological Marking**

Before we proceed with the typologies of topic-comment structure, one important point needs to be clarified. Although there is no absolute language universal, as many typologists claim, there is one universal that seems to hold true for languages other than topic marking languages. In the unmarked case, topic is associated with the subject NP, in other words, in the unmarked order of a sentence, it is the subject NP that serves as a sentence topic. Why is this the case? Since we shall discuss the sources of this generalization in the section below in detail, here we shall present the answers given to the above question in a rather simplified manner.

The grammatical role hierarchy asserts that in their relative order the subject precedes the direct object and the direct object the indirect object in a sentence <sup>5</sup>. The same idea is also expressed in Greenberg's universal 1 which states that " In declarative sentences with nominal subject and object, the dominant order is almost always one in which the subject precedes the object". As Greenberg argues, among the six logically possible orderings, those three ( VOS, OSV, and OVS) which occur very rarely are those where this order is not maintained. Thus, it is the relative order of the subject NP with respect to the other NPs in a sentence that defines the possible human languages.

This is the structural side of the case, and the functionalists, through a number of principles that they have developed claim that they have an answer to this question. They argue that the reasons are rooted in the human cognitive and psychological processes and this human quality is reflected in the serialization of information structure. Thus, as it is stated in Tomlin's (1986) *Theme First Principle*, old information precedes the new information since, shared information and thematic information, representing fundamental pragmatic notions, are grounded in cognitive processes. In this sense, shared information concerns the retrieval of referential information during discourse, and thus ultimately connected with the memory, and thematic information, which constitutes the other component of old information, ( i.e., topic ) concerns the focusing on the most salient information which is ultimately connected to attention. The same contention is also captured in other principles as well: *Attend the Most Urgent Information* of Givón, and *Given Before New Principle* of Gundel , etc. Returning to the classifications of languages in terms of topic marking, we shall finally note on this issue that all these principles and other related

principles are grouped under the general principle of *naturalness* — which we will discuss in detail below — concerns the form function relation.

As we have indicated above, Li and Thompson (1976) observe that basic sentence structure of some languages manifest topic-comment relation rather than subject-predicate relation. On the basis of this observation, they propose a typology which includes four basic types:

- (i) subject prominent languages
- (ii) topic prominent languages
- (iii) both subject and topic prominent languages
- (iv) neither subject nor topic prominent languages

The prominency is defined over the particular language's selection between *subject-predicate* and *topic-comment* relation in its basic construction. The following explains the situation:

- i. in subject prominent languages the structure of sentence favors a description in which grammatical relation subject-predicate plays a major role;
- ii. in topic prominent languages the structure of the sentence favors topic-comment roles

- iii. in both subject and topic prominent languages, there are equally important distinct sentence constructions, subject-predicate and topic-comment;
- iv. in neither subject nor topic prominent languages, the subject and the topic have merged and are no longer distinguishable in all sentences (Li and Thompson, 1976: 459).

To clarify the subject-predicate construction and topic-comment construction, they refer to two English sentences:

- |    |                                                                       |                 |
|----|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------|
| 7. | <i>John</i>                                                           | <u>hit Mary</u> |
|    | Subject                                                               | Predicate       |
|    |                                                                       |                 |
| 8. | <i>As for education, <u>John prefers Bertrand Russell's ideas</u></i> |                 |
|    | Topic                                                                 | Comment         |

It is argued that in subject prominent languages, the basic sentence structure is similar to (7), and in topic prominent, similar to (8). However, as Li and Thompson indicate, it will be an incorrect conclusion to claim that one cannot identify subject in topic prominent languages, and that subject prominent languages do not have topics. It should also be added here that much of the confusion stems from this property, as we will see below.

The typology and the member languages are given below:



Subject Prominent Languages      Topic Prominent Languages

Indo-European

Chinese

Niger-Congo

Lahu

...

...

SP-TP Languages      Neither SP nor TP Languages

Japanese

Tagalog

Korean

Illocano

(Li and Thompson, 1976:460).

Geneologically speaking, the place of Turkish in this typology is clear. It should be a member of the type Subject-Prominent and Topic-Prominent languages, since Korean and Japanese are, to some scholars, Altaic languages. To what extent this conclusion will follow from family membership, we will test this.

Li and Thompson indicate that their typology derives from certain theoretical considerations:

- (i) the subject and topic are distinct entities and there are certain properties that they do not share;
- (ii) basic characteristics of Topic-prominent languages;
- (iii) in Topic-prominent languages, topic-comment structure is indeed the basic structure.

The properties that subject and topic do not share, or the criteria that clearly distinguish the topic from the subject are the following :

i. *Definite*

Topics are defined by their primary characteristic property, that they should be definite. This condition does not necessarily apply to subjects. Subjects may well be indefinite. In other words, Topics are always definite and this includes generic NPs as well.

ii. *Selectional Relations*

As opposed to subject, a topic need not be an argument of a predicate. It may be an item not necessarily selected by a predicate in a given sentence. In Korean and Japanese, for example, topic markers mark even the temporal and locational expressions, which are not listed in the argument structure of a predicate. Topic prominent languages are defined over topic-comment structure and thus topic should always be present. The subject, as opposed to topic, is selected by the predicate and thus it establishes a relation with the predicate.

iii. *Verb determines 'Subject' but not 'Topic'*

Since subject and predicate display selectional relation, it is possible, in most cases, to predict what the subject of a given verb will be. This is not the situation with the topic: topic is not determined by the verb; discourse, in particular, may play a role in the selection of the topic. Since the constraint, if there is any, will not be imposed by the predicate, the speaker can choose any NP as topic in the discourse situation within referring to the verb.

#### iv. *Functional Role*

Topic and subject also differ from each other in terms of their functional roles: Topic has a constant functional role, namely that it is the “center of attention” in whichever sentence it occurs. On the contrary, subject’s functional role is not constant: sentences may have dummy, or expletive subject with no semantic role at all, a case common in subject-prominent languages. When it is not empty, its functional role is determined within the limits of sentence in which it occurs, not in the discourse.

#### v. *Verb agreement*

The subject in general agrees with the verb and this agreement is an obligatory one. However, there exists no obligatory topic-predicate agreement.

#### vi. *Sentence initial position*

Regardless of the morphological marking of the topic, many languages use the sentence initial position in coding topic. Subject, on the other hand, may occur sentence finally. The confinement of topic to the sentence initial position is explained by Li and Thompson in terms of discourse strategies. They argue that speech involves serialization of the information to be communicated and thus it is quite natural to introduce topic as the first element since it represents the discourse theme. Subject will not receive such priority in the serialization of information as a more sentence-oriented element.

#### vii. *Grammatical processes*

Many grammatical processes are directed to affect the subject. Passivization, reflexivization, relativization and the like are the processes that have profound effect on subject. However, topic plays no prominent role in these grammatical processes. Topic is syntactically independent of the rest of the sentence and thus these processes that involve deletion, establishing coreferential relation, or promotion are affecting sentential constituent the subject, but not the topic. These seven criteria are used to indicate the difference between these two notions, not to define them.

Three basic factors underlie these criteria: (i) Discourse Strategy; (ii) Noun-Verb relations, and (iii) Grammatical Processes. In terms of (i), topic but not the subject plays the crucial role in discoursial terms, since it is the topic which is the center of attention. As for (ii) and (iii), in these relations subject figures more prominently than topic. These relations are primarily affecting the subject as a structural element. Thus, subject has properties that are not shared by the topic; more importantly, where subject appears to be more as a sentence-internal notion, topic is a discoursial notion.

Much of the conclusion above, in fact, concerns the topic marking languages. A natural consequence of the typology proposed by Li and Thompson will be the search for crosslinguistic generalizations between topic-comment relations and their interaction with formal properties in the topic marking languages. There are many proposals advanced in this direction, however; as Gundel (1988:209) reports, crosslinguistic observation of these concepts suffer both from the existing terminological confusion and the requirement that correct generalizations on these concepts generally demand for investigating units larger than a single

sentence. She indicates two fundamentally important questions answers of which would yield correct crosslinguistic generalizations :

1. what pragmatic and structural properties are correlated with topic and comment in all languages, i.e., what universals of topic-comment structure are there, if any? and,
2. how do languages differ in the way they code the topic-comment relation and how are such differences correlated with other structural properties of these languages?

Languages which have topic markers, i.e., topic prominent languages, all share a number of structural properties: these languages have no dummy subjects, passive constructions are marginal (if they exist at all)<sup>6</sup>, zero NP anaphora are not syntactically restricted, and basic sentence structure is determined by topic-comment relations rather than by grammatical relations such as subject and object. All these languages have basic SOV order .

On the basis of these generalizations, she raises further questions: "The correlation between topic-marking and topic-prominent characteristic is hardly surprising. One would not expect a language to have topic markers unless topics played an important role in grammar. It is less obvious, however, why a correlation should exist between topic-marking and SOV word order." (Gundel, 1988:221)

Recall that in the section above we have referred to Greenberg's universal 1 and the so-called grammatical role hierarchies. Recall also that there is almost no language in the world in which the object precedes the subject in the unmarked order. However, although this is the major linearization strategy, there are other aspects of linearization which

follow from the relative order of the subject and object NPs to the verb. Without going into details here, we would like to note that OV languages are generally held to be postpositional, whereas VO languages are prepositional. There is also another universally observed tendency which Gundel does not mention; all the above stated properties of topic prominent languages are the properties of the rich case system languages, some of which do not have a morphological topic marker although they display the above mentioned structural properties. Besides, the existence of a rich case system is also associated with the SOV order, again as indicated above, SOV is commonly the basic order that we observe in topic prominent languages.

Gundel (1988) mentions two possible reasons for the above stated question: First, topic markers are always postpositional and they follow a sentence initial constituent, a constituent in the canonical topic position. Since the rest of the material in a sentence follows this first constituent, the topic markers, then — which also follow the first constituent — mark the major boundary between topic and comment. The second reason for the correlation between the topic marking and the SOV order for Gundel is that topic markers facilitate sentence processing: “In SOV languages, which tend to be left branching, assignment of a sentence-initial constituent to a main or subordinate clause must often be suspended until after the first verb is encountered. However, if the sentence-initial constituent is followed by a topic marker, it can only be assigned to the main clause.” (1988:222)<sup>7</sup>

Her typology also includes four classes. She reports that although for some languages morphological marking of the topic-comment structure is

the most direct way, this is not the sole system of coding topic-comment structure even in these languages. The languages that morphologically mark the topic-comment structure also form four classes on the basis of the four logical possibilities:

- i. Topic markers only (Burmese, Hmong, Hua, Lisu, Japanese and Korean)
- ii. Focus markers only (Duala, Marathi, Tamil, and Yukaghir)
- iii. Both Topic and Focus markers (Quechua, Mongolian)
- iv. Neither Topic nor Focus markers (remaining languages)

Topic markers are generally used to mark other syntactic relations as well. For example, in Korean, the topic marker can mark even the non-argument of the verb. In the following examples, given in Gundel (1988: 217), the topic marker also marks the time and place expressions.

9. a. John-ka i salam-lil manna-ass-ta.

John-subj this man-obj meet-past-dec.

‘John met this man’.

b. John-nin i salam-lil manna-ass-ta.

John-Top this man-obj meet-past-dec.

‘(As for) John, (he) met this an’.

c. i salam-nin John ka manna-ass-ta.

-top

(As for) this man, John met (him).'

10. suyeng-nin Waikiki-ka coh-ta

swimming-TOP Waikiki-SUBJ good-DEC

'(As for) swimming, Waikiki is good'

11. ecey-nin John-ka naksicil-lil ka-ass-ta.

yesterday-TOP John-SUBJ fishing-OBJ go-PAST-DEC.

'Yesterday, John went fishing.'

12. san-ey-nin namu-ka manh-ta.

mountain-at-TOP tree-SUBJ many-DEC.

'At the mountain, there are many trees.'

13. san-ey ka-l ttay-ey-nin moca-lil- ssi-la.

mountain-to go-REL time-at-TOP hat-OBJ wear-IMP

'When you go to the mountain, wear a hat.'

In the topic prominent languages, topic NP should not necessarily bear a grammatical relation to the predicate, as the above examples illustrate. This is generally the case in these languages since it is the topic-comment relation that defines the basic order, not the subject-predicate relation. Topic markers differ from case markers in this respect. They are different from case markers in two additional respects too: first, topic markers are optional elements, i.e., a language user may choose to mark topic NP or not under different discourse conditions mostly depending on the



identifiability degree of the topic; however, case marker is obligatory where it identifies the grammatical role of an NP. Second, as Gundel (1988) reports, topic markers are also commonly used to mark conditional and relative clauses since these structures share some basic properties of topic, namely that they are too taken as given information bearing elements with regard to the rest of the sentence.

In sum, as the above observations indicate, for some languages of the world, morphological marking is an option for topic identification. It appears that morphological marking of the sentence topic is closely associated with other syntactic properties of these languages as these languages share other structural properties other than morphological marking of the topic. 8

If a language does not mark the sentence topic with an overt morphological marker, then it should make use of some other formal means for topic marking. The necessity of marking the sentence topic and the formal means that languages employ for this function motivate the attempts for the functional universals research. When marking the topic through a formal mean is concerned, marking the topic with a particle or a morpheme, as it appears, constitutes the most straightforward situation. Among the other formal markings of sentence topic, crosslinguistic studies count *word order* and *intonation*. In the next section we will review the conclusions concerning subject and topic relation, or more generally word order as a topic marker.

### 1. 4. 3. 2. Sentence Topic: Syntactic Marking

In his study on language universals, Comrie (1981) indicates that using grammatical roles as a parameter for a typology brings certain hardships into the analyses. The grammatical role of subject, for example, is hard to define crosslinguistically and there appears many unclear cases. Universally, languages basically use two alternative ways of identifying their subject NPs: they either refer to morphological marking, i.e., subjects are marked with a morpheme, or subjects are identified through agreement, i.e., it is the subject NP which agrees with the verb in terms of number and person and thus a coreferential relation is established. However, given the differences in case systems (nominative-accusative vs. ergative-absolutive) and agreement patterns, such formal markers are not always reliable parameters to identify the subject role universally.

Comrie (1981) takes another turn and points that the semantic role agent and pragmatic role topic should be playing a role in the definition of subject. Sentence topic brings into analyses obligatory references to the semantics and syntax. It should be noted here that these generalizations are based on the notion of “prototype” of subject; although subjects are agents and at the same time topics, there are also many constructions where there is no match of this sort.

We have referred to Tomlin’s *Theme First Principle* above where he has associated the two components of the Theme (i.e., sentence topic in our sense) with the memory and attention, in other words, cognitive system of humans. There we have also referred to similar principles of

other scholars and Greenberg's universal which states that subject before object is the dominant linearization pattern in human languages.

There is one key notion that is generally employed in the pragmatic approaches to the linearization patterns. The notion of "familiarity" and the hierarchies associated with it is taken as the starting point of approaches to the structuring of information and thus identification of the topic in a sentence, or rather its canonical position. Tomlin's principle is simply just one example in this respect. The notion of familiarity — i.e., familiarity of the information unit to the language users in a discourse situation — can be taken from a broader or a narrower perspective. In the broader sense, the term familiarity refers to "closeness to the speaker's cognitive field" (Siewierska, 1988:61) and in this sense it is a relative notion depending on variables internal to the speaker.<sup>9</sup> In a narrower sense familiarity refers to "the speaker's focus of interest" in selecting the subject rather than linearization pattern. However, since there is the above preference of subject-before-object ordering, the subject selection ultimately identifies its relative order or introduction into the discourse. In other words, selection is also determining the order.

The arguments centering around the familiarity of an entity ( its selection and its relative placement in a serialization format ) and its expression derive from human cognitive processes. It has been indicated by many that ( e.g. Bock in Siewierska, 1988:84 ) adult language production and comprehension involves two types of syntactic processing: *automatic* which affects easily accessible data, and the other *controlled*, which is related to less accessible data. The experiments on human sentence production and sentence recall indicate that accessibility of

information correlates with the parameters high in the hierarchies. Thus, it has been concluded, or speculated from such preferences that, humans are likely to present the information which has already been formulated, i.e., assumed to be known, prior to the information that has not been activated yet. The reasons involved in this are again explained through human cognitive processes as, “... such a rendition of information not only allows the speaker to concentrate on the formulation and presentation of the less accessible material, but also aids the comprehension task of the addressee. The readily accessible language data is processed automatically, freeing the addressee’s processing resources for the controlled processing of the less accessible information. Moreover, the automatically processed data provides the basic frame or perspective for the interpretation of the utterance; hence the processing task of the interlocutor is made easier if this perspective is presented first” (Siewierska, 1988:85). Thus we have psychological evidence for the reasons why humans prefer to present first the given information and then present the old. In other words, both in the selection of subject NP to fulfill the topic function and the relative ordering of the sentential constituents there is some rationale which can ultimately be explained through central human cognitive processes and these are reflected in the organization of formal linguistic means in fulfilling the communicative needs and motivations of humans. The notion of perspective will have special importance in this study and we will try to explain the “marked” construction in connection with this notion.

A number of principles, similar to Tomlin’s principle quoted above have been proposed in the literature which are trying to capture the interrelations between the general tendency to present information

structure according to their salience of the pragmatic units and their corresponding formal counterparts. Herring (1990) provides a unified account for the attempts aiming at stating this function through its formal correlates. In other words, she compiles the answers for the general question, “ Which parameters or operational devices can predict pragmatic ordering of the sentence elements accurately. ” Herring identifies three *naturalness principles* on the basis of the answers given to this question by different scholars:

Principle 1. *Given Information Before New Information* (Gundel 1988). States what is given before what is new in relation to it. The structure of utterance in discourse builds on what is known, adding new information which moves the communication forward.

Principle 2. *First Things First Principle* ( Mithun 1987; Givón 1988; Gundel 1988). Provide the most important information first. This principle predicts that the most pressing or newsworthy information including that which is unexpected based on the preceding discourse will precede less important information in communication.

Principle 3. *Discourse Iconicity* (Prague School; Danes 1974). Information is ideally placed as close as possible to the part of the discourse which it relates, i.e., sentence starts with what has already been talked about, and ended with what is to be talked about next.

We should note that, according to statistical universals, languages, where the subject-before-object is not observed, constitute less than 5 % of the languages of the world. Maybe for this reason, Herring (1990:168) considers Principle 2 as one true universal of pragmatic ordering since it

covers VS languages, “When the topic of a sentence shifts or is otherwise unpredictable, it must be explicitly stated at the outset lest the hearer misinterpret what the sentence is about.”

Having stated the basic principles of functional approaches to the information structure and cognitive motivation behind the preferred orders, we believe that it becomes clear why the functional approach explains the existence of any linguistic form simply by referring to its function. It also becomes clear that in case where topic is not marked morphologically, it is the word order that takes this responsibility due to the ordering facts that we observe. This inevitably brings into the analysis some sort of a mapping relationship between topic and subject as these two entities are presented in the “first” place in information structure and in grammatical structure respectively.

The Familiarity Hierarchies consist of a number of parameters and aim at directly reflecting the tendencies.

**The Familiarity Hierarchies:**

more familiar > less familiar

topic > comment

given > new

definite > indefinite

referential > non-referential

Since these parameters indicate the preferences of assigning a specific position for the elements with the same functional specifications, they at the same time provide us with the relative linearization of the constituents in the basic order of a sentence. Unless there appear

reasons to alter the relative order of the entities involved, they are held to be occupying a specific location in the sentence <sup>10</sup>. In other words, such mapping makes it necessary to make reference to the formal hierarchies to see how constituents behave with respect to each other as well as with respect to particular ordering patterns.

### **Grammatical Role Hierarchy**

Subject > Object > Oblique

When considered together with the familiarity hierarchies above, it is clear that subject role ranks at the top of the hierarchy and is the least marked grammatical role to have access to the topic position.

As we have indicated at the beginning of this section, Comrie defines subject role in relation to topic and Agent, a grammatical role and a semantic role respectively. When we look at the semantic role hierarchy, for the subject role, we see the Agent role occurring at the leftmost side of the hierarchy, thus as the most possible candidate for the marking of subject NP.

### **Semantic Role Hierarchy**

Subject : Agent > Patient > Recipient > Benefactive > Instrumental > spatial > temporal

Object : Patient > Recipient > Benefactive > Instrumental > spatial > temporal

Closely related to the semantic composition of a particular predicate, the semantic role hierarchy helps to capture a number of important generalizations. In Chapter III we will constantly refer to the affects of



this hierarchy especially when we are discussing the transitivity in Turkish. A definition for each of the particular role labels will be given throughout the text where it becomes relevant with the immediate point of discussion.

Two additional hierarchies need to be mentioned here. These are the ones that are cited in the Familiarity Hierarchies, namely *Definiteness* and *Referentiality Hierarchies*. These two hierarchies that concern the semantic content of the NPs are very closely associated with the status of the information status of the NP. They are actually subset of the given > new hierarchy simply because it is generally the definite constituents that are identifiable by the hearer and thus associated with the given information. It follows that topic NPs are imposed a restriction in this that they are to be definite NPs. Referential constituents, on the other hand, do not necessarily have to be definite, however, they have at least a unique identity in the universe of a discourse. The relationship between these two hierarchies is so obvious that Croft (1991) for example, combines these two hierarchies into one through features:

| <u>Hierarchy of Feature</u> | <u>Hierarchy of Value</u> |
|-----------------------------|---------------------------|
| + definite                  | definite                  |
| - definite                  |                           |
| +referential                | referential indefinite    |
| - referential               | nonreferential indefinite |

In the next chapter we shall discuss the notions definiteness and referentiality in detail and try to show how these notions are closely related with the word order in Turkish.



When all the above discussions are put together we have the following picture, stated as simple as it can be: It appears that sentence subjects are generally definite NPs; since definiteness and referentiality are closely interrelated, subject NPs are thus referential NPs. In other words, such NPs fulfill the basic requirements for the topic function from a number of perspectives: topics are information bearing elements and informative content requires a constituent which is definite and thus referential. Otherwise, the reference of the topic could not be identified in the universe of the discourse. The definiteness and referentiality requirements do not hold on object or other oblique NPs in a sentence as they hold on the subject NP. This makes the subject NP as the most probable candidate to receive topic interpretation in a sentence. Taken from the relative ordering of the constituents in a sentence, again subject NP appears as the most prominent in both grammatical role hierarchy and in the semantic role hierarchy. If humans tend to express the most salient piece of information relatively earlier from the others, then, again subject NP appears as the only formal correlate for this function.

## **Conclusion**

In this section we have tried to indicate the basics of functional approach to language. We have identified the place of Functional Grammar(s) within the overall approach to functional approach to language. Some fundamental concepts of functional approach to language universals and

the recent outcomes of this approach are presented, especially through the reference to the notion of hierarchy.

We have seen that the pragmatic notion of sentence topic is closely interrelated with the grammatical structure and semantic roles. Here two aspects of a study of sentence topic have emerged very clearly. Any study on sentence topic should specify the semantic content of the NPs and the impositions on the NPs when they are to serve the topic function in a sentence. Second, analysis should be directed to linearization patterns and should identify the properties of a basic order as a starting point.

In the formal marking of a pragmatic notion of topic, as we have seen so far, languages have at least two options: they either mark the sentence topic through the use of morphological marker, or where they do not have a special marker, the word order, in other words, sentence initial position identifies sentence topic. The notions such as aboutness, givenness, familiarity and others that are related to sentence topic, as we have seen, come from general human cognitive and psychological processes. The tendencies that humans display with regard to linearization of information content of their messages are reflected in the ordering of the constituents. This tendency and others are also captured through a number of hierarchies some of which we have touched upon in this section.

## Notes to Chapter I

- 1 Among the current functional theories of grammar, at least those that are presented under this title, we have Halliday's, first, *Systemic Functional Grammar*, then only *Functional Grammar* and Dik's *Functional Grammar* and Kuno's *Functional Syntax*. Additionally, there are those functional models of grammar of Foley and van Valin's *Role and Reference Grammar*, and Givón's model of grammar without specifically including the term 'functional' in the title. There are still those models of grammar which include the terms functional in their titles, however, they can by no means be identified with the functional grammars listed above. Bresnan's *Lexical Functional Grammar* is an example of such models. See Nichols (1984) for a review of these models. Note that there are also many works by different scholars who apply the basic precepts of functional approach without proposing a systematic model of grammar, such as Gundel, Hopper, Thompson, and Prince, to name a few.
- 2 Schlobinski and Schütze-Coburn (1992:102-3) give metaphors associated with the notion of topic:
  - a. Topic as given and/or known information
  - b. Topic as a point of departure of the sentence
  - c. Topic as the constituent expressing what the sentence is about
  - d. Topic as the basis of communicative dynamism and topic continuity
- 3 We owe this abstraction in the representation of the S-topic aboutness to van Kuppevelt (1994)
- 4 More often in the literature, these languages are also called **double-subject** languages. In a similar line of argument, Comrie (1981) indicates that subject relation in topic marking languages is split between two NPs. Thus the subject relation is fulfilled by two NPs where one of these NPs is identified as the topic NP. We will see in Chapter III that there are proposals that Turkish is also a double-subject language, at least this was the case in the Old Turkish period.

The proposal comes from Erdal (1994) where he heavily relies on the relative clauses in cases where they appear as subject modifying expressions.

- 5 The formalist accounts also treat the subject NP different from the other grammatical relation bearing NPs. Subject is taken as a NP which does not appear as a constituent of a VP and thus has a relatively different relation to the sentence as a whole. It is the “first branching” NP of a sentence and directly forms a relation to a sentence as opposed to other grammatical roles which are linked to the sentence through the medium of VP.
- 6 If passive is reinterpreted as a topicalization strategy this observation appears as quite reasonable from this perspective.
- 7 She then refers to Japanese examples to indicate that topic markers do not occur in subordinate clauses in Japanese.
- 8 A typology proposed by Role-and-Reference Grammar of Foley and van Valin (1984) is based on the semantic roles and their syntactic encoding. In this respect, languages are of two types: role-dominated languages and reference-dominated languages. [ see Comrie 1988]
- 9 Siewierska (1988) indicates that Kuno’s empathy principle is similar to familiarity principle in this respect.
- 10 The notion of basic order and markedness will be discussed in the chapter III.

## CHAPTER II

### NP SEMANTICS AND SENTENCE TOPIC IN TURKISH

#### 2.0. Semantics of NP in Turkish

This chapter will concern itself with the issues that affect the representation of NPs in a Turkish sentence. More specifically, the analysis will concern the restrictions imposed upon the NPs that occur sentence-initially, i.e., in the sentence topic position.

It has already been shown in a number of studies that sentence initial position is restricted to the definite NPs in Turkish (Tura, 1973; Erguvanli, 1984; among others). This does not mean that indefinite NPs cannot occur sentence initially (Erkü, 1982; 1983). However when they occur, indefinite NPs should fulfill a number of other requirements concerning their semantic status. We will see below that some of these conditions are strictly discourse bound, and some others are related to the other semantic aspects of NPs in general, most of which again follow from universal characteristics. Specificity, animacy and other phenomena seem to play a crucial role in topicalization of indefinite NPs not only in

Turkish but also in other languages as well. Keeping to the unmarked order, it may also be argued that such restrictions are also semantic and grammatical restrictions which are imposed on subject NPs, not specifically concerning topichood. This, we will discuss in the Chapter III and try to illustrate how topichood conditions are related to the semantic content of an NP in both marked and in unmarked orders. There we will see that NPs status in terms of definiteness and indefiniteness play a key role in certain structures such as subject and object incorporation.

Notions such as definiteness, referentiality and specificity ultimately stand as a matter of discourse. However, before moving on the discoursial level, we would like to take the matter within the grammar of Turkish and try to illustrate those properties of grammar that help to determine the status of NPs from the viewpoint of semantics. That is to say, we would like to start with the grammatical devices that define the NPs and will argue that some of these properties also follow from cross-linguistic generalizations, especially from the relevant hierarchies.

## **2. 1. Some Properties of Nominal Marking in Turkish**

One important linguistic fact for Turkish grammar, in terms of marking the nominals, is that it lacks a full article system. In Krámsky's (1972) terms, Turkish may be counted as "only the indefinite article" language. That is to say, Turkish does not have a definite article in its grammar, though, it may be argued that it has an indefinite article. Still the existence of the indefinite article is not a clear case, given the fact that

“bir” which is taken as indefinitivizer in Turkish functions more primarily as a numeral expression. Since it is not the primary function of “bir” to indefinitivize the NPs that it premodifies, in most cases it is not easily recoverable which function it serves. Thus assignment of the indefinitivizer role to a linguistic entity as its “secondary function” can be taken as the non-existence of the article system as a whole. It can be concluded that NPs in Turkish are not premodified as to render them definite with an additional marker of some sort. “Bir” is used as an indefinite article and stands as the only element of the article system, if there is any in Turkish.

The second property of Turkish which would affect NP interpretation is the gender marking. Here again, Turkish lacks gender system; nouns in Turkish are not marked for gender and stand neutral. Apart from very limited instances, which are borrowed words or structures, gender plays no role in Turkish. The existing structures and items also do not appear as analogous on the basis of which new derivations occur. Thus gender does not help as nominal marker in the interpretation of NPs in Turkish.

Third, Turkish also does not display any form of object agreement. The particular semantic status of the NP does not lead any change in the verbal element, as is generally the case in many ergative languages. Additionally, in a free order language like Hungarian for example, we observe object-verb agreement which helps to clarify the semantic status of the NP.

Finally, number agreement which has important consequences on NP semantics in the sentence is less helpful in the interpretation of

nominals. Turkish nominal system does not display any form of number agreement. The head nouns do not agree with their preceding adnominal determiners; it is generally the case that any form of agreement is canceled out, i.e., agreement leads to unacceptability:

1. beş ev

five house

2. \*beş evler

five houses

3. beş şişe şarap

five bottle wine

4. \* beş şişeler şarap

five bottles wine

5. \* beş şişe şaraplar

five bottle wines

Irrespective of the type of the numerical modifier or the modified NP in Turkish, the plurality marker applies in the same manner. Although it has a very limited role other than person marking in the grammar, the plural suffix in Turkish has other consequences in the nominal system to which we will return.

Given the above picture that such markers the languages of the world incorporate into their grammar and use to identify the semantic



properties of NPs, Turkish has a different status. It appears that what it loses in terms of NP marking along the above listed grammatical categories, Turkish relies on its case system and word order. NPs that occur in sentences, whether lexical or pronominal are always supplied with sufficient features through which their interpretation is done without any ambiguity. Intonation and other phonological features are also effective in the interpretation of NPs in terms of their semantic status in the sentence.

## 2.2. Referentiality

NPs are referring expressions. In the simplest sense, a referring expression is said to be referring to some extra-linguistic entity in the universe. As such, the nature of reference, or the relationship(s) between referring expressions and the referred entities has been a long-standing issue in many areas including linguistics. Given the variety of the “actions” humans perform with the use of language, it is possible to enlarge the list of modes of referring <sup>1</sup>. Here, leaving the philosophical issues aside, we will concentrate on “grammatical context” that affect nominal expression's referentiality.

In the contemporary functional grammar theories, the notion “referring” has been treated as a pragmatic cooperative action between the speaker and the hearer in the universe of discourse. In this sense, as opposed to positivistic understanding, *successful reference* has priority over *correct reference*, since reference, “... is not mapping from linguistic

terms to individuals existing in the Real World, but rather a mapping from linguistic terms to individuals established verbally in the Universe of Discourse" (Wright and Givón , 1987:2). It follows that referential status of the NPs are ultimately determined by the *Universe of Discourse* within which they are located. In other words, what renders an NP as referential or non-referential does not derive from its own properties of itself as an NP as such but of the discourse. Any NP that occurs in the discourse receives the proper interpretation only with reference to the discourse as a whole. It is on the basis of the referential relations that a particular NP establishes in the discourse that it can be pronominalized or dropped out of the discourse as long as it is recoverable from the rest of the discourse.

In the functional grammar developed by Dik (1989:111) referentiality is defined in a formula as in the following:

S refers A to E by means of T

(Here S stands for the speaker, A for the addressee, E for the entity and T for the term)

In this approach, in using a term, speaker intends to guide the addressee to some entity about which he makes some predication. The information conveyed by the term must be clear enough for the addressee to pick out the intended referent among the infinite class of referents that may possibly occur in any act of communication. For functional grammarians and functional syntacticians alike, entities referred by the speaker can only be constructed in the mind. Thus, terms are the only devices for referring and, terms have two usages to achieve the proper

mental construction, Referent Construct and Referent Identification.

**Referent construct** is defined as:

S uses a term T in order to help A construe a referent E  
for T, and thus introduce E into his mental model

and **Referent Identification** is defined as:

S uses a term T in order to help A identify a referent E  
which in some sense is already available to A (Dik,  
1989:114)

There are conditions under which a referent is presumed to be available to the addressee. Among these are

- (i) long term pragmatic information that the addressee assumed to have;
- (ii) current pragmatic information, i.e., the contextual information about the referred entity;
- (iii) situationally evoked information which is perceptually available;
- (iv) inferences that may be drawn from the information provided by the above conditions.

Since reference is made through the use of linguistic devices, it interacts other features of NP semantics and syntactic organization. As the hierarchies suggest, depending on the context of occurrence, language users code the information by means of definite or indefinite NPs.

### 2.2.1. Referentiality and Definiteness

The referential status of NPs are also closely related to the notions such as definiteness, animacy, uniqueness and specificity. Thus referentiality is a scalable notion depending on the basis of its interaction with these notions.

As can be understood from the above discussions, both referentiality and definiteness correlate with the notion of givenness, the notion which determines the topichood. Thus any argument concerning NPs definiteness and referentiality will be expected to have important effects on the sentence topic. The same content is also expressed in the so-called *Familiarity Hierarchies* which we have introduced in Chapter I. Definite constituents are assumed to be more readily identifiable by the hearer. Referential constituents, on the other hand, may not necessarily be identifiable but are taken to exist, and they have their own unique identity in the discourse.

Coming back to definiteness and referentiality interaction, the **Definiteness Hierarchy** captures this relation in the most obvious way. It asserts that the more the NP is definite the more easily its referent can be construed. Here we repeat the feature composition of definiteness hierarchy that we have given in the previous chapter:

#### *Definiteness hierarchy features*

| <u>Hierarchy of feature</u> | <u>Hierarchy of values</u> |
|-----------------------------|----------------------------|
|-----------------------------|----------------------------|

|           |          |
|-----------|----------|
| +definite | definite |
|-----------|----------|

- definite

+referential    referential indefinite

- referential    nonreferential indefinite

We have indicated above that Turkish grammar does not employ many of the said features that would be used to establish NPs definiteness. We will see that the two features, referentiality and definiteness will determine the NPs syntactic behavior in Turkish sentences.

### 2. 2. 2. Approaches to Referentiality in Turkish

Tura (1973) is the first full scale research on NP definiteness in Turkish. She argues that in Turkish there are two types of definiteness and indefiniteness: The *absolute indefinite* and *indefinite*; the *quasi-definite* and *definite*. The following illustrates her categorization:

(i) The *absolute indefinite* points out only class membership without number distinction.

6. Köpek bahçede *top* buldu.

The dog found ball/a ball / balls in the garden.

(ii) The *indefinite* points out class membership with number distinction to pave the way for future reference to the same member with a definite NP in connected discourse.

7. Köpek bahçede *bir top* buldu. *Topu* hemen sakladık.

The dog found a ball in the garden. We immediately hide the ball.

(iii) The *quasi-definite* expresses partial or complete familiarity of either the speaker or the subject of the utterance or of both with the referent of the NP.

8. Adı Can olan *bir köpeği* arıyorum.

I am looking for the dog whose name is Can.

(iv) The *definite* indicates the complete familiarity of both the speaker and the hearer with the referent of the NP.

9. *Köpeği* buldum.

I found the dog.

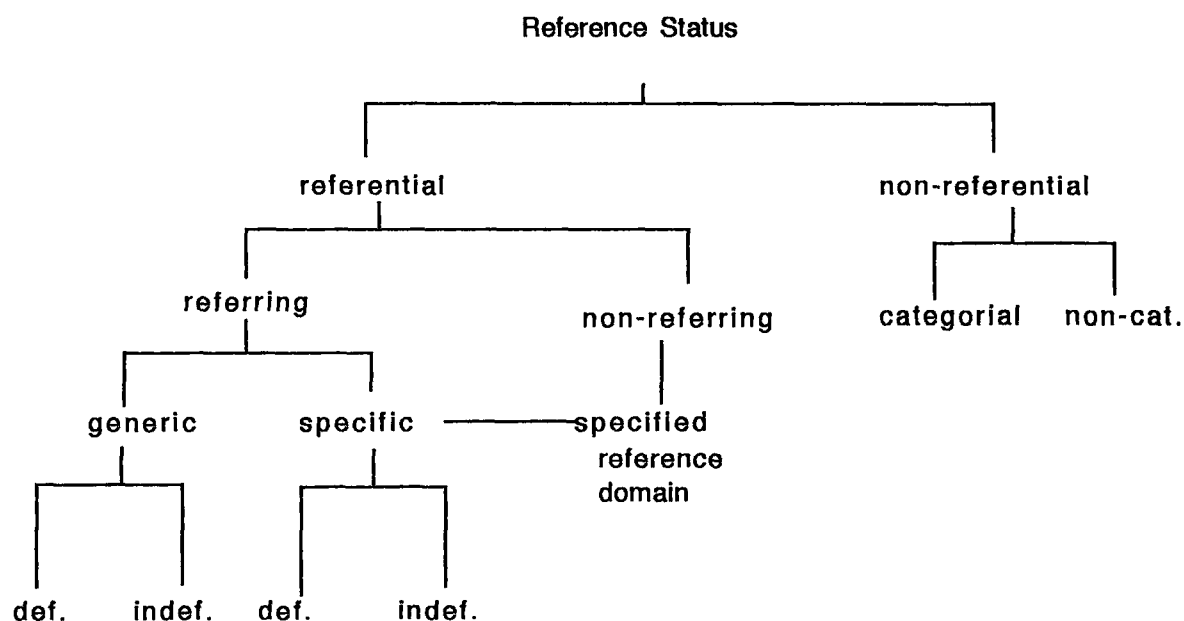
The absolute indefinite degree, which is unmarked, and the absolute definite degree, which is also unmarked, form the *end points* in this scale. As is clear enough from the scale of Tura (1973) definiteness and indefiniteness are conceived as purely semantic notions that are assigned to the referents of NPs.

Note that NP's definiteness as discussed by Tura refers only *object* NPs in Turkish. There is relatively little reference to the *subject* NPs in her analysis and this is a natural consequence of the topichood condition that topics are generally definite NPs. This again ultimately derives from the general condition on subjects that subjects are, at least in terms of frequency of occurrence in the natural data, overwhelmingly definite. Definiteness, as we will see below together with animacy, is the decisive

criteria for the NPs to occur sentence-initially, i.e., canonical topic position.

Although Tura's analysis does not correlate definiteness with referentiality, reviewing her samples and the Definiteness Hierarchy above, one can easily conclude that Tura's categorization implicitly entails the *definiteness-referentiality* bond. She further adds that definiteness in Turkish should be further analyzed in terms of word order, sentence stress and topic-comment structure. Given the above discussions concerning the “poor” definiteness marking in Turkish other than accusative marking, there seems to be no device to encode NPs definiteness. We will give the relevant examples of the definitivizing role of word order in section 2.2.4.

Nilsson (1985) is another comprehensive study on NP definiteness in Turkish. Although the study analyzes case marking properties in Turkish, Nilsson provides a more detailed classification which correlates referentiality and definiteness. Following is the summary of her conception of definiteness and referentiality interaction:



The most striking point in Nilsson's account is the distinction drawn between *Referential* and *Referring*. They are treated as two different notions; referential is defined as "potentially referring"; "referring" is used in the sense that the NP has a real reference in the universe of discourse. Thus reference relation is established more like in the fashion of Dik (1989).

In this framework, nonreferential nouns may be either *categorical*, denoting concept/category/class or *non-categorical*, denoting individualized entities. In the latter case, the very semantic features of the noun have been to some extent suspended. Non-referential nouns and referential but non-referring nouns are semantically indefinite (or non-definite), since the consideration of referents is impossible, or irrelevant (Nilsson, 1985:29).

Definiteness-indefiniteness noted just for referring nouns are interrelated with formal criteria and are semantically linked to either



*genericness* or *specificness* of the noun. Generic nouns are definite and specific nouns will be regarded as semantically definite.

Indefinite-specific nouns stand in between semantic definiteness, especially with respect to the speaker, and semantic non-definiteness, with respect to the hearer. *Specified reference domain* means that the noun is connected with a previously considered subset of the class of things denoted by the noun. A noun which is not truly specific, but for which it is possible to delimit a specified reference domain, is judged to be closer to specificness rather than a non-referring noun.

Depending on the above semantic classification of NPs, Nilsson identifies three basic referential status considering the object NP marking. Note that Tura has proposed four types, where Nilsson cancels out absolute indefiniteness class of Tura. Nilsson, incorporating referentiality to the analysis of definiteness, explains absolute indefiniteness of Tura through the notion of *categorial nonreferential*. Nilsson's classes are given below:

- (i) definite objects marked with accusative case
- (ii) indefinite specific objects that have a specified reference domain marked with indefinite article and accusative case
- (iii) indefinite objects marked with indefinite article.

The most detailed classification with regard to definiteness and referentiality in Turkish is made by Dede (1986) and Tura (1986) in their analyses on verbal and nonverbal sentences. Together, they both propose six possibilities:

- (1) definite-referential
- (2) definite-nonreferential
- (3) indefinite-referential
- (4) indefinite-nonreferential
- (5) nondefinite-referential
- (6) nondefinite-nonreferential

(Dede 149; Tura 166)

*Definite-referential* nouns are “value loaded nouns”; that is they make reference to particular entities which are known both by the speaker and the hearer.

*Definite-nonreferential* nouns are identifying unique roles or functions without referring to a particular entity. They are “non-value loaded” NPs or in Donnellan's (1966) terms they are ‘attributive’ nouns. For instance, the most common examples are the nouns such as “cumhurbaşkanı”, “başbakan”, etc. whose referent individuals are not fixed. Observe the following pairs:

10. Cumhurbaşkanı bugün Amerika'dan döndü.

The president returned from the States today.

11. Cumhurbaşkanı 7 yılda bir seçilir.

The president is elected every seven years.

In (10) “cumhurbaşkanı” is definite because it denotes a unique individual to whom the speaker and hearer can identify; it is referential since it does

exist in the universe of discourse. In (11) "cumhurbaşkanı" is definite because it maintains a specific role but it is not referring to a particular individual so it is called nonreferential. Both scholars claim that this difference originates from the "modal context" following Givón (1978). Givón (1984); Wright and Givón (1987) explain that referentiality and nonreferentiality potential of NPs do not reside on definite/indefinite articles but it resides in "propositional modality". They generalize the following principle which is pursued through the discussion of Dede and Tura:

Nominals may be interpreted nonreferentially only if they are under a non-fact scope. Otherwise they must be interpreted as referentially (Wright and Givón 1987:6).

*Indefinite-referential* nouns are marked with "bir" or other numerical expressions which introduce particular entities into discourse.

12. Dün Ayşe bir çocuk gördü.

Yesterday, Ayşe saw a child.

*Indefinite-nonreferential* nouns are number marked nouns which do not denote a particular individual.

13. Sen yeni bir araba almalısın.

You should by a new car.

"bir çocuk" in (12) is referential which can be referred by zero anaphora in an ensuing discourse: *Ayşe bir çocuk gördü. Daha sonra ø evdekilere anlattı.* In (13) "bir araba" can not be read referentially because the verb

is marked with a modality suffix. Thus, (13) expresses a necessity in which the object NP does not denote a specific individual.<sup>2</sup>

Furthermore, Dede holds that the accusative with indefinite article can be restricted to indefinite-referential nouns. The accusative with nonreferential reading is not appropriate. Hence, *bir* + *accusative* strengthens the referential status of the indefinite specific objects.

*Nondefinite-referential* nouns are the categorial nouns that refer specific entities.

14. Dün Ali'ye *çorap* aldım.

Yesterday, I bought socks for Ali.

*Nondefinite-nonreferential* nouns are also categorial nouns. These are generally the incorporated nouns. Generic nouns are included in this class:

15. Bugün kitap alacağım.

I will buy a book today.

In (14) *çorap* is referential because the speaker has a particular socks in his mind at the time he is producing the sentence. Pragmatically, the referential intention of the speaker is crucial. The object NP is not marked with accusative because "the speaker is not interested in the identifiability of the object" (Dede 1986:148). In (15) *kitap* is nonreferential "at the time of the utterance the referent ... not yet exist for the speaker" (Dede 1986:161) and it is incorporated with the verb since it does not stand by itself as an independent noun.

Once more, the referentiality of the noun *çorap* in (14) and the nonreferentiality of *kitap* in (15) can be evaluated with respect to the *propositional modality*. (14) expresses the fact of buying socks; it is a "realis assertion". In (15) the speaker is holding a "possible truth" that of buying an entity which does not exist in the act of communication. Therefore, (15) can be treated as an "irrealis assertion" which creates a non-factual scope, and it is this scope which assigns a nonreferential status to the noun.

In Dede's and Tura's approach, generic nouns are also identified as nondefinite and nonreferential. However, there are certain differences between the *generic* and *categorical* nouns and counting generics as nonreferential and nondefinite would yield to override these differences. In what follows, we will point out the differences that we observe between generic nouns and categorical nouns as they relate to referentiality. Note that this distinction is captured in Nilsson's classification in the table above.

Generic nouns do not make reference to a predetermined individual and/or entity or a specific situation. Semantically, generic nouns are definite or indefinite specific nouns. They do not create any difficulty for the hearer to identify the referent of the noun. "Once the hearer recognizes that the NP is in a generic expression he will know that he can select any or every member of a given class of referent." (Nilsson 1985: 63) From a syntactic viewpoint, generics should be marked with accusative when they are direct objects in the sentence; they may be stressed - except for contrastive stress and they may be pronominalized when they are

preserved in the discourse (Tura 1973). Moreover, they are the topics in the topic-comment articulation.

On the other side of the paradigm, the categorial nouns display different syntactic, semantic and pragmatic properties when compared with the generic nouns. Categorial nouns, as opposed to generic nouns can not be pronominalized. Furthermore, they must be stressed and they are restricted to the preverbal position in the sentence since they are incorporated into the verb. It thus follows that they cannot be marked for number or case, since no linguistic material is permitted to intervene between the categorial noun and the verb. It will later become clear from our discussions on the object incorporation that, even though these nouns are not marked for case and number, they still act as sentential object.

Categorial nouns semantically refer to concepts; generic nouns refer to types (Givón 1984) or classes (Lyons 1977) without specifying any individual member of the *class* or *type*. In other words, the 'particular' referent of a generic noun is not a single entity but 'type' of the referent. There are three types of generics to refer to *type* in Turkish:

(i) they may be bare lexical NPs, unmarked for number.

16. *İnsan* konuşur

Man speaks

(ii) they may be marked plural

17. *İnsanlar* konuşur.

Men speak

(iii) they may be marked with indefinite article

18. *Bir insan konuşur.*

A man speaks

Sentences with unmarked generics, which are close to the semantic interpretation of categorials, express class, role or function with the sense that they define and classify the properties of that class.

19. *Takvim ayları gösterir.*

Calendar shows months ( of the year)

20. *İnsan ölümlüdür.*

Man is mortal

Plural generics emphasize the idea of variety or kinds denoted by the NP.

21. *Güller güzel kokar.*

Roses smell well

Having a nice smell is the basic characteristics of all varieties of the roses.

From the above discussions we conclude that generic nouns and categorials display significant differences, as opposed to Tura's and Dede's argument that these both classes are nonreferential and nondefinite. They differ in terms of referentiality, syntactic occurrences, and semantic interpretation. These in turn, will be effective on the topic

interpretation when such NPs occur sentence initially in Turkish sentences.

Generic expressions define their subject NPs as generic. Although it is more plausible to talk about generic expressions rather than generic NPs, the contemporary literature favors naming them as generic NPs so we will follow this tradition.<sup>3</sup>

If generics are semantically referential NPs as is pointed out above, then Dede's and Tura's approach is either misleading or insufficient since they classify generics as nonreferential in their scale. Thus, what is meant by the term "referential" needs to be clarified. As is maintained in the beginning of this discussion, both scholars adopt Givón's (1978) definition of referentiality. In this sense, referentiality "involves roughly, the speaker's intent to 'refer to' or 'mean' a nominal expression to have non-empty reference, i.e. to 'exist' within a particular universe of discourse" (Givón 1978:293). This definition emphasizes merely the existence or non-existence of referents in the universe of discourse disregarding the entities "syntactic referential power". For instance, *Cumhurbaşkanı* in (11) is nonreferential by the definition of Givón (1978), i.e., it has an empty reference; in (10) *Cumhurbaşkanı* has non-empty reference denoting an individual. This consideration is purely semantic treatment of the NP. On the other hand, the principle of the "existence in the particular universe of discourse" gives us contradictory results: in (11) although "the president role" exists in the act of communication, abstractly it is disregarded and the NP lost its chance to be treated as a discourse referent.

We may conclude that attributive NPs have referential value, contra to Givón's account, to the extent that a speaker, in Dik's terms, may use



such an NP as “ T ” in order to help the addressee “A” to identify a referent “ E ” which is in some sense already available to the A, given the particular discourse context.

This discussion indicates that referentiality of NPs’ is directly influenced by syntactic, semantic, and pragmatic conditions. However, even in the absence of proper syntactic markers, NPs can still be referential within a discourse. Syntactic markers seem to play a role to the extent that they contribute to the identifiability scale of NPs in sentence and in discourse.

There are also proposals in terms of identifying the status of referentiality, given the fact that syntax, semantics and pragmatics of NPs correlate. Hence, we may mention types of referentiality as *semantic referentiality*, *syntactic referentiality* and *pragmatic referentiality*.

Semantic referentiality concentrates on the pure existence or nonexistence of the referent of nouns in the universe of discourse. In other words, the referred entity should exist in the universe of discourse in the purest sense of existence.

Syntactic referentiality means that a noun is syntactically referential when "something is predicated about it. Predication gives a role to NP or put it into different relations with other NPs." (Dik 1989). Syntactic referentiality is marked by overt markers in the sentence. That is to say, referential status of an NP is predicted by the existence or non-existence of markers that occur with it.

Pragmatic referentiality encodes, among other things, “communicative intention” of the speaker that is shaped by the ensuing discourse ( Givón, 1983). For instance, the speaker first introduces a concept into communicative setting and marks it in some way, mainly marking is indefinite <sup>4</sup> since a novel entity is introduced. In the ensuing discourse, this NP is referred via anaphoric devices, such as, pronouns, zero anaphora or pro-drop. Thus, its marking changes due to the arising discourse conditions. When the speaker does not intend to refer to it again, its status would change once more, and it goes on like this to capture the “topic continuity” throughout the interaction. Note that, in its most extreme case, the referred entity need not be mentioned in the discourse, given the *bridging inferences*, a referent can be construed. These three types of referentiality — syntactic, semantic, and pragmatic — are mutually exclusive and affect the interpretations of the referential status of NPs.

So far we have discussed the notion of referentiality in relation to definiteness and partially in relation to genericity. Definiteness is more closely interrelated with syntactic markers and as indicated at the beginning of the section, Turkish grammar is devoid of many markers which would be associated with the marking of NPs in terms of definiteness. This has led many scholars, including Johanson (1977), Erdal (1981), and Csato (1988) among others to propose that specificity is the *better* term for Turkish rather than definiteness. We will discuss specificity of NPs and its interaction with referentiality of NPs in section 2.2.5.

### 2. 2. 3. Indefinitivization in Turkish

Turkish article system lacks definite articles but uses numeral “bir” as an indefinite article. We have indicated before that the second function of “bir” in most cases leads to ambiguity. Tura (1973) notes for “bir” that it not only indefinitivizes the NP but also marks it for singularity and thus number marked NP introduces a new individual into the discourse. Nilsson (1985) on the other hand, argues that indefinitivization marks only referential nouns. Below we will review the uses of “bir” and its functions in the Turkish nominal system. As an indefinite article, 'bir' is treated as one of the 'term operators' and functions as an adnominal modifier.

There exist two main types of adnominal modifiers in Turkish: *attributive modifiers* are those modifiers which are basically the adjectives attributing certain qualities to the nouns like güzel, iyi, etc. *Referential modifiers*, on the contrary, are not attributing qualities to the nouns but modify the referential properties of the NPs. That is to say, referential modifiers, such as determiners, help to specify the mode of reference of the NP. They either mark the NPs as referring specifically or uniquely.

The proper determiners like articles or demonstrative pronouns are combined with nouns to produce expressions that identify the referent of the combination. In this sense, when “bir” premodifies a noun, it renders the referent of the NP indefinite. Here, we once again encounter with the intricate interaction between form, meaning, and use and the overlapping

strategies and functions. These properties of indefinitivizing function of “bir” are given below:

(i) ‘Bir’ marks the “class membership” of the noun that it modifies. In the equative and qualitative type of copulars, the predicate NPs marked by **bir** function to classify the referent of the nouns as one of the members of a given class.

22. Türkiye bir Akdeniz ülkesidir.

Turkey is a Mediterranean country.

23. Gül bir çiçektir.

Rose is a flower.

24. Ben bir insanım.

I am a humanbeing.

This function of “bir” is overtly emphasized especially in modal and generic contexts.

25. Bir öğrenci çok çalışmalı.

A student must work hard.

26. Bir at ot yer.

A horse eats grass.

In partitive constructions, the referent of the 'bir' marked noun is the individual that belongs to the preceding set. In other words, the class membership of the *bir* marked NP is overtly pertained in such constructions:

27. Partiden bir yetkili

A commissioned man from the party

(ii) 'Bir' modifies NPs expressing quantity whose referents are measurable in size and in number. Considering the NP's quantificational properties, it seems that 'bir' does not mark an individual but "a unit of the referent" (Schroeder 1994:45) of the NP it precedes. Thus, in [ *bir* + quantifier phrase] construction, the quantity is interpreted as a unit in its partitive/proportional context.

In [ *bir* + mass noun ] construction, *bir* gives the referent of mass nouns a unit reading and without 'bir' they do not hold such a meaning.

28. 100 dolar gibi bir para

a sum of something like 100\$

29. bir zaman sonra

a while later

30. bir haber için

for a piece of news

Note that some of these constructions also require a postposition. Moreover, these mass nouns can only be modified with quantifiers

combined with indefinite article "bir". These quantifiers point to the indefinite quantity.

31. biraz para

some money

32. birçok haber

a lot of news

33. herhangi bir zaman

any time

In short, it can be concluded that the indefinite article marked NP either denotes individual member or the unit of the class.

(iii) Along with other number markers, such as quantifiers and plural suffix, the indefinite article is a *number coding device* especially when introducing a new concept or a new NP into a discourse setting for the first time. In other words, NP modified by the indefinite article *bir* receives singular interpretation.

34. Bir gün yolda bir Amerikalıyla bir Kayserili karşılaşırlar.

One day an American and a man from Kayseri meet on the road.

35. Köşeyi dönünce bir okul göreceksin.

When you turn the corner, you will see a school (building).

36. Yazılarını bir kitapta topladı.

He compiled his writings in a book.

"bir" marked NP carries the meaning of individuality, or singularity. In all the above sentences, *bir* marks a single entity of a certain class, meaning simply, "not more than one". Note that, even in this context, it still preserves its indefinitivizing function, namely that unidentifiability of the referent of NPs still present in the expression.

(iv) With measure words like *saat*, *sayfa*, *gün* etc., 'bir' is the absolute numeral without having any indefiniteness sense. It delimits the extend of the action, state, and the like.

37. *Derdini bir sayfada anlatmış.*

He has expressed his problem in a page.

38. *Kek bir saatte pişti.*

Cake is baked in an hour.

(v) The indefinite reading and the numerical reading of "bir" can only be distinguished in Turkish by using the devices of intonation. If 'bir' is carrying a sentence stress, then it should be a numerical 'bir', if not it functions as an indefinite article.

39. *Paketten bir kitap çıktı.*

A book was in the parcel.

With stress on 'bir' it means only one book, otherwise, it is any book that is not known by the speaker has been in the box.<sup>5</sup>

We conclude that Turkish has only indefinite article in its system. The use of indefinite article will be shown to have important effects on the topicalization, namely that its effects on the NPs will determine whether they can be moved to the topic position.

#### **2.2.4. Definitivization in Turkish**

Both the previous discussions and the example sentences indicate that the NP and the properties of the NPs in general we are analyzing are related to grammatical, semantic and pragmatic roles. In other words, what we referred to as semantic content of an NP comes from the role that NP plays in the sentence. In fact, there is no nominal expression in any sentence without any role whether grammatical, semantic, or pragmatic if these can ever be separated from each other. Bearing any role, consequently, means bearing a role indicating element. It follows from this simple generalization that nominals in a sentence are “marked” by some available means. Turkish, in this respect, relies primarily on its rich case system and nominals that appear in a sentence are all marked with the appropriate case pointing to their grammatical and semantic role. Though it may appear too strong a generalization, this explains why Turkish does not employ a specific definiteness marker. Since NPs in a Turkish sentence cannot escape from case marking, and if there is some sense in the generalization that any form of marking contributes to NP’s definiteness, then there is no need for an additional element for marking definiteness specifically.



Universally, oblique NPs other than indirect object are always marked structurally. Additionally, dative displays certain properties that differ it from other obliques in that dative marking is generally reanalyzed as definiteness marking. This is particularly due to notion of *animacy* since datives, other than allative, always mark the animate nominals. This, at the same time, forms the foundations of our arguments related to the availability of dative NPs to the topic position in Turkish. From here, we are left with the marking of subject and object NPs and it is at this point that we observe both similarities and differences among the languages of the world.

Leaving the arguments concerning subject marking aside for the moment, we see in Turkish only one situation where the object NP is not marked for case. In the so-called object incorporation structures, the object NP is caseless and forms a structural unit with the verb that permits no other linguistic material to intervene between the two. In the following chapter we will see that immediate left of the verb in a Turkish sentence is a position where nondefinite NPs (i.e., NPs with no marking, subject and object alike) reside. A number of important generalizations follow from this observation. The most important is the role of word order in marking the definiteness.

Ever since Tura (1973), word order, in addition to the case marking, is considered to be a linguistic means of definitivizing of NPs in a sentence. The famous example of her analysis indicating the definite vs. indefinite contrast is given in (1) below:

40. a. Yerde çocuk yatıyor.

On the ground, a child was lying

b. Çocuk yerde yatıyor

The child was lying on the ground

In this intransitive clause, the animate subject which appears preverbally in (40a) is analyzed as an nondefinite NP, whereas, the same NP with the same intransitive verb in (40b) occurs sentence initially, in other words, appears in the canonical sentence topic position with the same grammatical role is analyzed as definite NP. The same format of argumentation, as argued by many including Erguvanlı (1984) and Knecht (1986), is applied in the analysis of the so-called subject incorporation structures. The relevant generalization that generally comes from these observation is that nondefinite NPs in Turkish tend to occur preverbally. Where this is the obligatory condition for nondefinite direct object NPs, conditions on nondefinite subject NPs are less strict, mostly arising from the interaction with the animacy of the NP in question.

To sum up the initial arguments, we conclude that Turkish primarily refers to cases in marking the NPs in terms of their definiteness. The additional strategy is the word order, where the nondefinite direct object NPs are restricted to the immediately preverbal position and are never allowed to occur elsewhere in the sentence. Movement to sentence initial position generally renders nondefinite animate subject NPs definite, due to the specific property to of the sentence initial position. Note that Turkish uses, among the universally valid strategies in marking the subject NP, the two most common ones: In Turkish, subject NPs are case-

marked, i.e., “nominative”, and verbal agreement is only allowed for subject NPs, which form a coreferential relation.

The answer to the question what renders an NP definite in Turkish, then has three sources: *case marking* ( actually any form of marking), *word order*, and *adnominal modification*. There is yet a fourth option which is related to phonological factors such as stress and sentence intonation, which we exclude from our arguments. We will now turn to the details of definitivization in Turkish.

#### 2.2.4.1. Definiteness Marking Devices

This section of the study will focus on definitivization of direct object NPs in Turkish. For subject NP marking, we will only refer to [ NP<sub>gen</sub> NP<sub>poss</sub>] constructions. We will first introduce the pragmatic sources of definiteness and the role of accusative marking in these pragmatic contexts. It will be clear that for Turkish the accusative marking has other functions than marking the direct object for definiteness. Finally we will discuss the definiteness effect of possessive suffix in Turkish.

The literature on sources of definiteness include those factors that are primarily pragmatic in nature. We have listed some of these factors as discussed by Dik (1989) earlier in this chapter in 2.2.1. The same content is also captured by many other functionalists, including Ariel (1990), Hawkins (1991), Givón (1992) among others. Each of these sources sets sufficient pragmatic conditions for the accusative marking of direct

objects in Turkish, in other words, all of the following situations, accusative marking is obligatory.

(1) *Situationally determined definiteness*: The context of the situation shared by the speaker and the hearer of the discourse provides non-linguistic clues for the definite use. For instance, in the first mention *bread* is definite in a dinner table situation:

41. Ekmeği verir misin?

Could you please pass the bread?

(2) *Anaphoric definiteness or definiteness from textual clues*: The indefinite entity has been already introduced into the active file of the hearer. When this previously established entity is referred once more, it becomes a definite noun. For instance,

42. Ø kitabı okudun mu?

Did you read the book?

(42) can be established through the previous mention of the direct object; the speaker and the hearer have already talked about the book and they are both familiar with the identity of the referent "book". In short, the shared knowledge between the speaker and the hearer determines the domain of anaphoric and situationally determined reference.

On the other hand, common nouns, proper nouns and some demonstrative and plural pronouns that are used deictically are

inherently definite irrespective of whether they are anaphorically or situationally referring.

43. *Seni / bunu / Ali'yi gördüm.*

I have seen you / this / Ali.

The identification of the referent depends on the relative interaction between the speaker and the hearer. *Seni* (you) refers to the hearer; *bunu* (this) refers to an entity pointed by the speaker in the act of the speaking. These are all deictic uses.

In any non-deictic use, the use of pronoun presupposes the existence of a unique referent which has been familiarized by the speaker and the hearer. In the followings, *herşeyi* and *herkesi* make reference to all persons and things that are identified by the speech interlocutors beforehand.

44. *Herşeyi gördüm.*

I saw everything.

45. *Herkesi gördüm.*

I saw everybody.

(3) *Frame-based generic knowledge*: Frame-based generic knowledge of the speaker does not always produce definite nouns in Turkish. The accusative marks the definite DO when the speaker intends to make the referent of the DO identifiable in terms of his frame-based knowledge.

46. Usta tamirhaneye girdi ve çırağı aradı

The mechanic entered the warehouse and looked for the assistant

It is possible to utter the following without definitivizing the noun:

47. Usta tamirhaneye girdi ve bir çırak aradı

The mechanic entered the warehouse and looked for an assistant

While expressions concerning frame-based knowledge allow for indefinite NPs to occur, this option is not available in the *whole-part reference*. The whole-part reference (which is categorized under the frame-based knowledge of the speaker) necessitates the definite use of nouns. Hawkins (1978) develops the term, *Associative Definiteness* to cover anaphoric references which require that an NP is definite through its semantic relation to another previously mentioned NP. This semantic relation can make reference either to the parts of the *antecedent set* or to the *possessed entity*:

48. Yeni ev bitti. Ø Dün (Ø) çatısını boyattık.

The new house is finished. Yesterday we painted its roof.

49. Ø Dün bir cüzdan buldum. Ø (Ø) Sahibini tanıyorum.

I found a purse yesterday. I know its owner

As these examples suggest, in the whole-part relation, associative definiteness is marked by the possessive suffix in Turkish. The [genitive + possessive] compound can explicitly show this fact as in *cüzdanın sahibi*;

*evin çatısı*. We will come to the definitivizing effect of genitive and possessive below.

#### 2.2.4.2. Definiteness Marking vs. Syntactic Marking

At this point, the relevant question is whether the accusative case marking always indicates definiteness in Turkish. Following the pragmatic sources of definiteness, we will now try to answer the above question.

Accusative case is analyzed as objective case in Turkish, i.e. the case that marks the direct object role. It is generally known that the preverbal DOs which are marked with accusative is interpreted as definite NPs:

50. Ayşe dün Mehmete *kitabı* verdi.

Yesterday, Ayşe gave the book to Mehmet

The book mentioned is known before and occurs with the accusative case as opposed to the unmarked DO *kitap* which does not presuppose any previous mention of the book.

51. Ayşe dün Mehmete *kitap* ø verdi.

Yesterday, Ayşe gave Mehmet a book

Now, consider the following pair:

52. Çocuklar süt sever

Children like milk

53. Çocuklar sütü sever

Children like the milk (Dede, 1986)

Both (52) and (53) are grammatical sentences. There seems to be no obligation to mark the DO with the accusative although it appears so in (53). "Sütü" in (53) is not considered to be a definite noun since it occurs in the generic context, which is formed primarily with the plural generic subject NP and the aorist. In this context, the accusative marked noun is still preserving its nonreferential and categorial status, so it does not refer to a particular entity — for instance, particular amount of milk — in the universe of discourse. Put it differently, nonreferential DOs that are casemarked in the statements of “general truth” are not interpreted as definite NPs, simply because they are in accusative case.

Note that when the generic DO is plural, it obligatorily receives the accusative case ending:

54. Bir öğretmen öğrencileri sevmeli

A teacher must like students

55. \* Bir öğretmen öğrenciler sevmeli

As observed by Erguvanlı (1984) and Dede (1986) accusative seems to lose its definitivizer” role in such contexts and it acquires a different role which is called as a *discriminatory role* by Erguvanlı. In other words, accusative acts as a “syntactic marker” rather than a semantic one.



A similar fact is observed more clearly when the non-preverbal object is marked with accusative. When the DO is moved from its unmarked position for the purpose of contrast or focus, it should carry accusative case. Accusative does not individualize the DO via definiteness or specificity but it simply uproots indefinite objects so that they can move freely in the sentence. On the other hand, the referential status of the DO does not change, i.e., it is still categorial and non-referential (Johanson 1977; Dede 1986).

56. Çocuk burada çiçek satıyor.

The child is selling flower(s) here.

57. Çocuk çiçeği burada satıyor.

The child is selling the flower here

58. Bizim evde Aytül her zaman çay yapar.

Aytül always prepares tea in our house.

59. Bizim evde çayı her zaman Aytül yapar.

Aytül always prepares the tea in our house.

Johanson emphasizes that *çiçeği* in (57) is semantically [- specific] and [-individual] but [+ categorial]. Similarly, Dede also claims that *çay yapmak* belongs to a class of houseworks, i.e., shares the same features of *çiçeği* of (57), done at home regularly hence “it is not definite or referential”. Here again, accusative case is not definitivizing the object NP.

### 2.2.4.3. Possessive and Adnominal Marking

So far we have seen that accusative marking is made obligatory through some pragmatic sources of definiteness. However, as indicated above, there are other uses of accusative in Turkish where it does not definitivize the NP it marks. We will return to arguments on the role of accusative at the end of the chapter where it correlates with the information status of NPs.

Two other “cases” — genitive and possessive — also seem to play a role in definitivizing the nominals in Turkish. We have indicated above that possessive suffix through associative definiteness relation marks the NPs definite in a *whole-part context*.

The [NP<sub>gen</sub> NP<sub>poss</sub>] construction may occur with subject, object and indirect object roles in sentences. In all of its occurrences, it always receives definite interpretation. In this construction, genitive may be deleted and the remaining structure displays simple compound structure properties in Turkish. There are some approaches to this structure in Turkish from a formalist perspective where the genitive marked NP is identified as the ‘subject’ of the structure. What interests us here is that, as argued by Kornfilt (1984), the contrast between *kadın hakları* and *kadının hakları* also points to the definiteness contrast.

In literature there are a number different conceptions of possessive marking in Turkish. Grönbech’s and Benzing’s are the earliest approaches to (cited in Schroeder, 1994) equate the third person possessive suffix of Turkish with that of Indo-European definite article. In the similar line of

argument, Lewis (1967) and Swift (1963) propose the same conclusions. More recently, Johanson (1977) and Csato (1988) object to these conclusions and argue that possessive suffix in the possessive compounds can only be analyzed as the marker of the nominal compound. Since we will be concerned with simple NPs with a definite marking, compounds and the role of possessive suffix will not concern us here. The role of the possessive suffix will only enter our arguments as long as it helps to identify a referent through whole-part relation in the sense it was argued above.

Concluding our remarks on the role of morphological marking for definiteness we will now refer the adnominal marking. The role of word order in definitivization has been touched upon briefly in this section; however, word order and its effects on both definitivization and topicalization will be discussed extensively in the following chapter.

Adnominal modification includes a variety of structures that can be used to modify nominals, among which we have relative clauses, adjectivals, determiners, etc.; however, here we will refer to adnominal demonstratives only. These include the demonstratives in their deictic use: *bu*, *şu*, *o*.

60. *Bu adam, /şu kadın, /o öğretmen seni sevmiyor.*

That man/This woman/ That teacher does not like you.

Among these deictic demonstratives especially *o*, is regarded as a definite article in Turkish. Although *o* cannot be a genuine article like English *the*, it nevertheless definitivize the NPs. The correlation between the articles and demonstrative pronouns has originated from the idea that articles

derives from demonstratives. Yet, this claim is criticized by Krámsky (1972) and the fundamental semantic and categorial differences between articles and demonstratives are illustrated with a comment that these two are separate grammatical categories.

In the beginning of this chapter we have argued that any form of marking will be reanalyzed as a contribution to the definiteness of an NP. So far we have seen the function of indefinite article “bir” and followingly, in this section, the formal means of definitivization in Turkish. We now move on another field where we will see the contexts in which indefinite NPs can be both specific and thus referential as well as unique. The section on *specificity* will include discussions concerning the other aspect of NP semantics in relation to topichood in sentences.

### 2.2.5. Specificity

Semantically, definite NPs are held to be specific since their referent is easily identifiable and unique. What we refer to as specific in this section should be understood as **indefinite specific**. In other words, we will discuss [+ unique], [ - identifiable ] NPs. The arguments here concerns the specificity of the object NPs in Turkish sentences. Specificity of subject NPs is marked by adnominal modifiers or relative clauses.

Structurally specificity of object NP in Turkish is coded as:

**bir + DO + ACC**

61. Ali *bir gazete-yi* okuyor.

Ali is reading the newspaper.

Indefinite determiners, e.g. *birkaç*, *birçok*, *her*, etc., may replace “ bir ” in the above structure without yielding any change in the specificity interpretation of the object NP.

Broadly speaking, specificity derives its properties when the referent of DO is [+unique], in other words, an NP is specific when the speaker has an individual entity in his mind as its referent (Enç 1991; Csato 1988 among others).

The speaker emphasizes the [+unique] value of the referent of an expression assuming that the hearer can identify the referent of the expression by picking out an equal entity or class of the entity with which he is familiar with. The referent and the known class of objects are co-extensive: “the referent not only belongs to known class but is identical with it” (Csato 1988:122). The class is either presented by the context or by the complex NP which premodifies the class uniquely:

62. *Okulumuzda çalışan öğretmenler arasında birçok doktoralı öğretmen var.*

Among the teachers who work in our school, many of them have Ph.D. degree.

Specificity and uniqueness are defining each other mutually. That is to say, uniqueness and specificity are the features that are used to define each other. Thus, discussion of the uniqueness of an NP automatically brings about its specificity value. Csato (1988:122) captures this correlation:

|     | unique | specific |
|-----|--------|----------|
| NP  | -      | +        |
| NP  | +      | +        |
| *NP | +      | -        |
| NP  | -      | -        |

According to Nilsson (1985) specific NPs exist in the “specified reference domain” which is signaled by the accusative case. Accusative marking of indefinite DO not only makes the NP specific but also it displays a particularization (individualization) effect on its potential referent. Consider the following pairs:

63. *Ayşe bir kitap soruyor.*

*Ayşe is asking a book.*

64. *Ayşe bir kitap-ı soruyor.*

*Ayşe is asking the book.*

(63) maintains the specific reading in which two interpretations are possible: (i) the speaker knows that particular book and easily identifies it; (ii) the speaker relates the DO to a particular group of books known at the time of speaking and Ayşe wants to buy this book. In this sense, the particular group of books narrow down the class of potential referents and

constitutes a *specified reference domain* providing familiarity to each individual entity being the member of this set.

Nilsson's *specified reference domain* defined for indefinite specific NPs is extended in the specificity discussion of Enç. Enç (1991:7) states that accusative objects are specific and, semantically they are interpreted as *partitives*. In this sense, "specificity of the NP places a constraint on the structure of the domain of discourse that it occurs." Put it differently, the partitive specificity marks the referent of the DO as the member of a "previously given set". In this sense, partitive context and the "specified reference domain" denote similar concepts. Observe the following sentence:

65. Odama birkaç çocuk girdi.

Several children entered my room.

66. İki kız tanıyordum.

I knew two girls.

67. İki kız tanıyordum.

I knew two girls.

An indefinite set of entities is introduced into the discourse with *birkaç çocuk*. When this sentence is followed by (66), the accusative marked *iki kız* is conceived as an anaphoric expression with the previous set *birkaç çocuk*. where *iki kız* will be interpreted as the individuals belonging to the class previously mentioned. On the other hand, (67) is totally

excluded from this antecedent set since it is not marked for specificity by the accusative. Thus, inclusion of “iki kız” into the class is blocked.

Specificity - Partitive relation can be tested on the example sentences. Replacement of the partitive phrase instead of the accusative marked construction reveals that the accusative marked construction is expressing specificity in the context. This is illustrated below:

68. Kızlardan ikisini tanıyorum.

I knew two of the girls.

Thus, similar to *indefinite specific direct objects*, indefinite partitives — with genitive or ablative — which refer to a subgroup of the referent of the NP contained in the partitive — kızlar — are “necessarily specific” (Enç 1991:10). The partitives without accusative yield ungrammaticality:

69. Ali kitaplardan ikisini aldı.

Ali bought two of the books.

70. \*Ali kitaplardan ikisi aldı.

71. Ali kitapların ikisini aldı.

72. \* Ali kitapların ikisi aldı.

So far it has been shown that indefinite specific direct objects imply *covert partitive relation* which can create an anaphoric link with the antecedent set. Similar *anaphoric specificity* is also observed with the indefinite partitives.



It is known that *quantifiers* are also semantically indefinite determiners. Observe the following sentences:

73. Öğretmen her öğrenciyi kontrol etti.

The teacher controlled every student.

74. \* Öğretmen her öğrenci kontrol etti.

The direct object NP modified with an indefinite quantifier needs an accusative marking; otherwise the sentence will be ungrammatical. Regarding the above examples and tests for specificity, it seems that “universally quantified” NPs are also specific. Once again, the fact that covert partitives are specific expressions, this conclusion provides further evidence for the universal quantifiers in that “ Universal quantifiers in natural languages quantify over contextually given sets” (Enç 1991:11). That is, in *öğretmen her öğrenciyi kontrol etti*, the universal quantifier does not entail that the teacher controls all the students on the earth, but only that the teacher controls every contextually relevant ( which already exists in the discourse domain) students. This becomes clear when the universal quantifier is substituted for a partitive phrase:

75. Öğretmen öğrencilerden herbirini kontrol etti.

The teacher controlled each of the students.

Contextually relevant individuals are previously introduced in the discourse. If quantification is over contextually relevant sets of individuals, it can be deduced that NPs that quantify are specific.

However, note that for some of the indefinite determiners, i.e., "weak determiners" such as *birkaç*, *birçok*, *az*, and numerals, assigning accusative to their modified NP is optional. Whenever the modified NP is marked with accusative, it is interpreted as specific NP.

Similar arguments for the referential properties of determiners are introduced in Csato (1988). According to Csato, 'specificity' is the only concept that is grammaticalized systematically by means of accusative case. Hence, this provides the only empirical evidence to test the specificity and the uniqueness of the referent of the NP modified by these determiners.

What is the discourse function of specificity? Specificity fulfills a special discourse function, namely "thematic prominence". It is claimed that the referent of the accusative marked DOs have thematic prominence over the other NPs in the discourse. The accusative marked indefinite direct object and unmarked indefinite direct objects are identified in different ways by the hearer; "The absence of the accusative suffix advises the hearer not to bother identifying the referent while presence of this suffix advises him that the referent of this NP though not yet determinable by the hearer, will be of relevance to ensuing the discourse" (Comrie 1981:129). In other words, it can be hypothesized that an argument that has a 'thematic prominence' in the main theme of discourse is likely to appear in the accusative to enforce the specificity of the NP. An example can be drawn from Nilsson (1985:67)

76. İnsan isterse... bir aynayı kırma sebebini felsefeye yükleyebilir.

If one wants to, one may ... attribute the reason for breaking a mirror to philosophy.

*bir ayna kır-* [break a mirror/ mirrors]; *ayna kır-* [mirror breaking; break mirror] are the two possible DO candidates. Yet the accusative marked direct object is chosen because at the time of its appearance this type of act has been established at the theme of the story from which this sentence is taken.

In short, specificity has its own place in the discourse since it marks the NPs semantic properties such that these properties will be exploited by the speaker in the discourse. These semantic properties mainly have two sources. They may be purely the properties of referents itself. That is, the speaker would like to draw the hearer's attention to identify the referent of the NP as [+unique] when it is marked for specificity. Or these semantic properties may also exist on the basis of the anaphoric relations, i.e., the specific noun is in the anaphoric relation with its antecedent set.

In any discourse setting, indefinite marking of nouns appears as obligatory in the introduction of new information to the discourse. The indefinite marking of the newly introduced information will in turn establishes a set for the expressions to come in the ongoing discourse, i.e., the following expressions refer to indefinite expressions anaphorically. On the other hand, marking of specificity is optional, at least in the introduction of new information. Marking of NPs for specificity serves basically for establishing thematic prominence. Specificity also highlights the indefinite NPs and provide additional information about its referent.

More importantly, for the purposes of this study, specificity is the highly required feature that the topic NPs should be marked for.

### **2.3. Sentence Topic NP and Its Semantics: Definite and Indefinite**

In the first chapter of this study we have reviewed the typology proposed by Li and Thompson (1976). In this typology the so-called Topic Prominent languages are identified on the basis of displaying topic-comment structure rather than subject-predicate structure. These languages also differ from many others in terms of a specific marker for the topic. It is further indicated by Gundel (1988) that these topic markers do not necessarily mark NPs that are the arguments of the verb, for example they are also used to mark adjunct NPs with adverbial function, expressions time and location, etc.

What is striking, actually something expected, is the fact that topic markers mark those NPs that are definite at the same time. This is the most straightforward evidence that topichood and definiteness are very closely tied notions. Consequently, this can be reduced to the notion of givenness and general human cognitive processes that what is given information should be made “identifiable” through the linguistic means that express this content. Gundel (1988) reports that in topic prominent languages, the topic marking morpheme is also functioning as definitivizer, as the following Japanese examples illustrate:

77. Neko wa kingyo o ijitte.

cat top    goldfish OBJ play-with

The/ \*a cat is playing with the/a goldfish.

The relationship between topic and definiteness, again discussed by Gundel in similar vein, holds for English too. Note that what the following example tries to illustrate is very similar to the examples of Tura, (cf. section. 2.2.4) concerning the effect of definitivization function of word order in Turkish. The marked order of English sentences below select definite NPs as their external topic NP, in the so-called Left-Dislocation (LD) and Right-Dislocation (RD) constructions respectively:

78. a. The /\*A window, it is still open.

b. It is still open, the /\*a window.

From the examples above, concerning Japanese, English and the Turkish data we have reviewed so far, and the additional evidence provided by the more general crosslinguistic studies, we may conclude that, in terms of their semantics, topic NPs are definite NPs. This condition is so strong that even in the presence of an overt morphological topic marker in the grammatical system, this marker selects definite NPs as possible topics. Recall also that, as we have argued at the beginning of this chapter, the notion of definiteness is required for a more general pragmatic condition, namely referentiality. Note also that the definiteness hierarchy incorporates referentiality hierarchy.

The major parameter for an NP to be S-topic is its referential power. A topic NP should be pragmatically referential within a discourse which the speaker intends to refer to a particular individual or entity by means

of this topic NP. If the speaker refers to a particular individual or an entity, he makes the referent of a topic NP [+ identifiable] and [+ unique] for the hearer. Hence, this signals the fact that the speaker syntactically marks the NP "definite."

Given this, it becomes clear that topics must be represented by referential expressions which are usually definite NPs. Crosslinguistic research illustrates that in various languages, NPs in topic positions are necessarily definite or are interpreted as being definite even though there is no explicit markers to indicate their definiteness.

The definite NP is the one whose referent is uniquely identifiable by the hearer. Thus, if we consider the language user's processing of language, it seems plausible to propose that the hearer can easily assess and store (Reinhart 1981) information relative to the S-topic as soon as he uniquely identifies the entities in the discourse context (cf. automatic processing in 1.4.3.2). On the basis of this correlation between *identifiability* and the *topic selection or mentioning*, Gundel (1985: 87) proposes the topic identifiability condition as a precondition for the felicitous topichood.

### **Topic Identifiability Condition**

An expression, E, can successfully refer to a (pragmatic) topic T, iff E is of a form that allows the addressee to uniquely identify T.

This bond between definiteness and topichood is the logical consequences of the specific properties attributed to topic. Topic is always correlated with the part of a sentence which is referring to the "given" information in some sense, for example, to information stored in the

hearer's memory; or to information that is in the consciousness of the addressee at the time of speaking ; or to information that is predictable or recoverable from the preceding discourse. In all these conceptions where "topic" is correlated with the "given information", functionalists always emphasize the speaker's previous knowledge or his familiarity (cf. Prince 1981[a]: assumed familiarity) with the referents of the discourse entities.

This shared knowledge or *assumed familiarity* between the speaker and hearer appears to be a basis for the identifiability of the topic NPs; an NP whose referent is already familiar is necessarily definite. The correlation between "referential givenness" and the "topichood" is captured in the Topic Familiarity Condition of Gundel (1985)

#### **Topic Familiarity Condition**

An entity E, can successfully serve as a topic, T, iff both S and A have previous knowledge of or familiarity with E.

*Topic familiarity* and *topic identifiability conditions* are two closely related conditions that reflect the pragmatic properties of topic in natural languages. However, they can be suspended like all other pragmatic conditions under specific conditions without causing any ungrammaticality in the language. For instance, in English indefinite specific NPs can be dislocated and they can serve the function of S-topic.

79. An old preacher down there, they augured under the grave where his father was buried. (Prince 1985)

In Turkish, indefinite NPs can be S-topic when the referent of topic NP is interpreted as the member of pragmatically definite and delimited set. The set is identifiable by the speaker and the hearer but the individual member of this set cannot be identifiable.

80. dün gece 15 kişi vardı ya, bir misafir sigarasını yanık unutmuş.  
(Erkü 1982: 32)

there were fifteen people last night, as you know. A guest left his/her cigarette burning

*bir misafir* has a topic function; first of all, the whole sentence — intuitively — asserts something about *bir misafir*; secondly, it belongs to a delimited set. In our case, it is *the set of visitors* which is identified by the speaker and the hearer. Hence, it is clear that the set is definite, even though the referent of the topic NP is indefinite in the sense that the individual denoted by this NP can be identified neither by the speaker nor by the hearer. This topic NP is specific on the basis of the so-called specific anaphoric interpretation carried out on the basis of previously established antecedent set.

When *bir misafir* is considered independent from a discourse context, it becomes an indefinite and nonspecific NP. The sentence with this NP is regarded as “all new predication” — i.e., it does not code any topic-comment structure — which can be the answer of the question “What happened?”

81. ne olmuş?

What happened?



82. bir misafir sigarasını yanık unutmuş.

A guest left his/her cigarette burning (Erkü 1982:31)

The example above designates the fact that topic familiarity or identifiability conditions can sometimes be too strong for the subject/topic NPs in Turkish in unmarked structures. However, this does not mean that these pragmatic conditions are useless and should be abandoned totally. In marked constructions in Turkish, these conditions regulate topicalization or they act as preconditions in the topicalization of NPs.

In short, as it is stated by Reinhart (1981), *pragmatic referentiality* is a necessary and sufficient condition for an NP to serve the topic function. However, Gundel (1985) regards referentiality as a necessary but insufficient condition which is relatively weak when compared with the topic identifiability and topic familiarity conditions.

We may then conclude that, as captured in the definiteness hierarchy, the notions of definiteness and referentiality contribute to each other directly. It naturally follows from here that the requirement of definiteness, even in the topic marking languages, derives from the general processing condition on topic NPs, i.e., they should refer to something that is “identifiable” and “automatically” processed in the context of discourse. However, there are also discourse conditions where indefinite NPs can also be sentence topics. This does not mean, however, that indefinite NPs, when they function as sentence topic are at the same time nonreferential NPs. On the contrary, these NPs derive their referentiality in the discourse situation through pragmatic referentiality.

Semantically indefinite NPs cannot be S-topics by themselves but they can be used as *specific* or *generic* NPs. In this case, they behave like referential expressions denoting an individual or a set. Hence, specific indefinites can be the S-topics.

## Conclusion

In this chapter we have reviewed the basic semantic properties of NPs in Turkish without referring to the grammatical and semantic roles that they bear to predicates in the sentences. Among those properties of NPs we have discussed, referentiality, definiteness, indefiniteness, and specificity.

Two aspects of linguistic structure enter into explanations concerning sentence topic: semantics of NP and the word order. This chapter has focused on the semantic properties of NPs in Turkish and the role of word order in definitivization of NPs. The conclusions of this chapter can be summarized as follows:

1. Among those grammatical processes that may affect particular NP's semantic content, Turkish does not have a specific definite article. Besides, considering other grammatical processes that are related to nominals in general, Turkish is a rather "poor" language. It lacks gender markers, and head nouns do not agree with the premodifying numerical expressions in terms of number. Such "loses" are recovered through the rich casemarking system, given the fact that all forms of marking

contribute to the NP's definiteness. Since Turkish rarely leaves NPs unmarked for case in a sentence, this situation is somehow compensated. Where the NPs are not marked for case, they are restricted to immediately preverbal position in a sentence and thus properly interpreted in terms of their semantics.

2. Additionally, word order is another "formal" marker of definiteness, a conception which is well-established for Turkish.

3. The relation between definiteness and referentiality can be decomposed into shared features; these two notions are ultimately decisive in the topichood of an NP. There are, however, cases where referentiality of the topic can be established with indefinite NPs, where these NPs are semantically or anaphorically specific under certain discourse conditions.

The discussions on semantic content of NPs and their interactions can be summarized in the table below:

| SEMANTIC PROPERTY | REFERENT PROPERTY |        |
|-------------------|-------------------|--------|
|                   | Identifiable      | Unique |
| definite noun     | +                 | +      |
| indefinite noun   | -                 | -      |
| specific noun     | -                 | +      |
| categorial noun   | -                 | -      |

Here, there seems to be no difference between the referent properties of indefinite nouns and categorial nouns. Recently, following Rijkhoff (1991) Schroeder (1994: 8) adds another "referent property" which distinguishes nouns with the same referent properties; **shape** indicates the spatial-semantic properties of nouns where referents of the nouns are assumed to

be quantity of a certain extent, or a mass of certain extent. According to “shape” property, only categorial nouns lack this property.

There is still yet another notion that needs to be mentioned. The notion of *animacy* has important effects on both semantic interpretation of NPs and their relative ordering in a sentence; however, this notion is closely associated with grammatical and thematic roles, thus will be discussed in the next chapter.



## Notes to Chapter II

- <sup>1</sup> Doğan (1993) discusses the different types of reference in natural languages.
- <sup>2</sup> Kocaman (1988) presents an analysis concerning modality-discourse interaction.
- <sup>3</sup> More recently, Schroeder (1994) uses the term *transnumeral* instead of *categorical*.
- <sup>4</sup> This will concern topic introduction and topic continuity, the notions which we will discuss in Chapter IV.
- <sup>5</sup> “bir” may occur with other classifiers and determiners in Turkish. Following are some samples:
  - (i) *Bir* can cooccur with a group of words that show or question the quantity of the nouns like *az*, *çok*, *kaç*, *takım*, etc. This combination forms a group of “quantifiers” that have indefinite quantification scope over the modified nouns. In the meaning of “a few, a little”.
 

*birkaç*, *birçok*, *biraz*, *bir takım*, etc.
  - (ii) With measure words, *bir* can either classify the referent of the noun or it can indicate the unidentifiable quantity of the noun.
 

*bir tomar*, *bir yığın*, *bir tutam* mention an unidentifiable quantity; *bir grup*, *bir takım*, *bir çuval*, *bir ton*, *bir kamyon* show the measurable quantity of the entities. Note that the latter set can modify abstract noun', such as, *bir araba /ton laf etti* to emphasize the exaggerated quantity of the modified noun in a metaphorical sense.
  - (iii) With the numeral classifier *tane*, *bir* classifies the referent of the noun. Moreover, since *tane* quantifies the noun by constituting “distinct entities”, it strengthens the function of *bir* “as one distinct entity”, especially it is used when introducing a new concept or topic into a discourse setting.

*Bir tane yeni model bilgisayar işimizi görür.*

## CHAPTER III

### SENTENCE TOPIC AND WORD ORDER

#### 3. 0. Information Flow

The need to distinguish old and new information in a given discourse situation appears to be a universal communicative need. In the previous chapters, we have presented some arguments regarding the sources of such a need, mainly drawing on the conclusion from both observations on universally preferred tendencies in linearization of information bearing elements in a sentence and the psycholinguistic conclusions that correlate packing of information and the general human cognitive processes. We have also seen that, though the need is universal, languages rely on different means of encoding or signaling information structure.

In this chapter, we will focus on word order and try to provide an account for the variations in the encoding of same information through different ordering possibilities. To do this, in the first place, one has to have a notion of “basic” or unmarked order, and the analysis should start with the basic order in order to account for the “marked” orders, and the differences in interpretation that these structures bring into discourse understanding. We will see that the rich case system of Turkish provides

the language to express grammatical and semantic roles in different orders in a rather free manner and this option distinguishes Turkish from position-bound languages ( i.e., languages which mark the grammatical roles through syntactic position) in terms of major topicalization processes. We will first review the basic properties of Turkish syntax and then the explanations developed so far concerning the order of major constituents in a Turkish sentences. Next, starting with the non-verbal sentences, we will move on to the intransitives, transitives, and ditransitives in Turkish and try to provide a unified account to the topicalization processes where one general condition will be the guiding line, namely that topicalization is sensitive to grammatical roles and thematic roles.

The semantic status of the NP that we have reviewed in the previous chapter will receive extra treatment in this chapter as it relates to the grammatical and semantic roles, i.e., the complex interrelations between subject NP, the Agent role and notions of animacy and definiteness, etc.

When ordering of the constituents of a sentence is concerned, the sentence initial position, that is, the position from which the “information flow” will start, stands out as the most “natural” position where the topic NP will be expected to reside. The metaphor of “flow” here, “ ... is meant to suggest ongoing change in the status through time” (Chafe, 1992:399), and it is concerned with the status of the entities rather than their content. In other words, variations in the word order, mainly for reorganization of information structure alters their information status in a sentence without affecting their ideational content. Hence, any change in the linearization of information signaling elements will create each time a

new information structure. Following the definition of a basic order in the section below, we will interpret the marked order in a more broader sense in which the role of thematic roles will be given a special status: any change in the thematic role of the subject NP can also be interpreted as a “marked” order even though there is no syntactic or stylistic movement in the sentence. This will be shown to follow from a basic idea that in the unmarked order, information flow is from Agent to Patient in a canonical transitive clause schema. When another role is assigned to subject NP other than the Agent, in a broader perspective, this may be taken as a sufficient condition for the sign of markedness, where this structure has nothing to do with the voice, i.e., it may well not be passive.

In short, the notion of information flow and its direction together with the conditions defining the “basic” order will be the issues that this chapter of the study will try to handle.

### **3.1. “Basic” Order**

The definition of basic word order is a necessary condition to provide an explanation to the variations observed in the ordering of the major constituents in a sentence. However, the definition itself is not an easy issue and there are other factors intervening. The notions applied to define the basic order includes the notions of naturalness and frequency of occurrence among others, which can be apprehended differently in different theoretical contexts. Without going into the details of the theoretical debates surrounding the notion of basic word order, we will



understand it as it is stated in Siewierska (1988:8). According to Siewierska, the basic order within the context of typological studies is generally identified with the

... order that occurs in stylistically neutral, independent, indicate clauses with full noun phrase participants, where the subject is definite, agentive and human, the object is a definite semantic patient, and the verb represents an action, not a state or an event. In other words, it is the ordering of constituents in prototypical transitive clauses ...

If the above definition of basic word order is accepted, then, as we have indicated above, not only the movement or scrambling rules will result in a marked order but also a change in the semantic roles of the subject and object NPs may well be interpreted as “marked” structures.

The notion of **markedness** also comes from the Prague School studies and the term originally was developed by Trubetzkoy in his theory of phonology. In its broadest sense, the term markedness refers to the distinction between what is neutral, natural or most likely to occur and what differs from the unmarked in terms of some parameter. As in the case of definitions concerning basic order, the terms markedness is defined differently by different studies. Davison (1984) takes another turn and argues for a “scale” in the analysis of marked constructions. Those structures that depart from the “neutral” order will naturally be taken as the structures creating new topic-comment structure and depending on their degree of departure from the neutral, they can be scaled. In Davison's scale, degree of markedness starts with the active sentence as the least marked construction and extends over to structures such as Passive, Raising to Subject, Though Movement, Raising to Object, etc. Among the

most marked structures, Davison counts Left Dislocation (LD), Right Dislocation (RD), and Topicalization for English. Note that common to all these structures, we see a change in the natural flow of information where it is not the content of the information bearing items, but their information status is what matters here.

There is yet a final theoretical point that we should mention before proceeding to the analysis. The basic word order, as the definition suggests, is based on the canonical structure of a transitive clause. In this respect the notion of Transitivity needs to be clarified. Here in this study, we will interpret the concept of transitivity as it is defined by Hopper and Thompson (1980), where the notion of transitivity is taken as discourse-bound concept. The analysis proposed Hopper and Thompson defines ten parameters which identifies the degree of transitivity where the notion of transitivity is understood in a traditional sense that an activity is carried over or transferred from an agent to a patient. This implies that there will at least be two participants and these two are participating an action which would have “effect” on the part of the patient. Note here that both the definition of the basic word order and the transitivity refers to semantics roles.

Having set the basic theoretical premises that will be effective in this section of the study, we will first refer to the non-verbal sentences and intransitives. Common to these both types of structures, there is a single NP with a grammatical role and a predicative element, in case of non-verbals a nominal element functions as the predicative element, and the case of intrasitives, a one-place verb functions as the predicative element. These two types of structures will be studied differently from the

transitives (including ditransitives) in that there no transference of action is involved in the sense that the notion of transitivity is generally understood and second, it is the oblique context that the semantics of predicative element creates will be important in many respect which is not the situation with the transitives. Arguments concerning the structure of the basic word order in Turkish and the effects of case marking in distribution of grammatical and semantic roles thus will precede the section concerning transitives.

### **3.2. Subject Only Sentences**

From the definition of basic order above and from the general tendency to place the most salient element to the sentence initial position, typologists conclude that sentence subject is the sentence topic. In the so-called non-verbal sentences, where the predicative element is a nominal expression and in the intransitive clauses where occurs only a single NP obligatorily, and in both constructions the obligatory NP functions as the sentence subject, an impression occurs most readily that in the identification of topic NP no complication would be arising in these constructions. Below we will present the problems that most commonly arise with these types of sentences. The non-verbals will be discussed under two headings, existentials and substantives; intransitives, though it requires to be discussed under two headings, as unaccusatives and unergatives, the existence of the distinction in , as we will see below, cannot be argued without serious drawbacks.

### 3.2.1. Non-verbal Sentences

The non-verbal sentences in Turkish are of two syntactic types. The distinction is based on the type of the predicative element: In *existentials*, the predicate is either **var** or **yok**; in *copulars* ( or *substantives*) the predicate is either a **nominal** or an **adjectival**. Predicates, depending on the syntactic context, may bear case, person, and number markings.

#### 3.2.1.1. Existentials

The sentences below are the examples of the four possible orders and the constituent types that we generally observe in existential sentences. It is generally agreed that the primary semantic function of existential sentences is that they express *existence* in a variety of domains, i.e., existence or non-existence of an entity, the existence of an entity in place or in time, etc. Existentials with a possessive term ( as in (4) , [NP<sub>gen</sub> NP<sub>poss</sub> ] express ownership.

1. NP var/yok (dır)

Su / Tanrı/ Güneş var/yok.

Water/God/Sun exists

2. NP<sub>loc</sub> NP var/yok

Masada bardak var/yok.

Table-loc glass (there) is/is not

3. NP<sub>loc temp</sub> NP var/yok

Beş-te(Yarın) otobüs var/yok.

Five-loc (Tom.) bus (there) is/is not

4. [ NP<sub>gen</sub> NP<sub>poss</sub>] var/yok

Alinin parası var/yok.

Ali-gen money-poss has

Same in many languages, in the examples (2) and (3) location in place and location in time are both signaled by locative case-marker on the relevant NP which mainly serves to establish a “frame”. In the structure [ NP<sub>gen</sub> NP<sub>poss</sub>] the genitive marked NP is also serving as a frame setting element within which the subject is interpreted. One relevant generalization, actually the one covers similar other structures, is that non-definite subject NPs are restricted to the immediate left of the predicative element. In other words, in the so-called subject incorporation structures, and in object incorporation structures alike, irrespective of the grammatical role the NP expresses, all non-definite NPs in Turkish should occur in the preverbal position. In the case of the existentials, we see that in locative and temporal existentials, the non-definite categorial subject NP occurs immediate left of the existential predicate. Since these subject NPs are *referentially weak*, the hearer cannot identify the referent of the subject in the universe of discourse easily and thus such subject NPs cannot scramble away or permit other material to intervene. Hence, they are similar to those of object incorporation structures of the

transitive clauses. One general conceptual reason to this is that the subject NP is not agentive and thus it does not cause any change in the world; the predication is simply on its existence or nonexistence. In the following structures, we observe the restriction on the movement possibilities of existential subjects:

2'            \* Bardak masada var.

3'            ?\* Otobüs beşte var.

Note that animacy of the subject is not a relevant criteria in these structures, i.e., even in the case where these subjects are animate, the restriction does not loose its grip.

5.            ?\* Çocuk bahçede var.

There is a kid in the garden.

Since subjects are taken to be topics in the unmarked order, the subject NPs of the existentials deserve some comment. The topichood of the subject NP of existentials is different than the topic of verbal sentences in that such topics are said to be carrying “new” information and/or introduce new concept into the discourse. Existentials, semantically speaking can be defined as constructions which hold a relation between a frame and a new concept signaled by the subject NP. Hence, they are “presentative” and a number of other properties of these constructions derive from this property.

In this respect one clear difference between the English and Turkish existentials is that whereas in English such sentences have “dummy” or “expletive” NP in their subject position, in the Turkish sentences we have

a lexical NP or, as in the case of, expression of possession, a complex NP. This difference points to the most important difference between the two languages, namely that Turkish has no “dummy”, semantically empty subject as opposed to English; a difference which is actually rooted in the more deep principles of grammars of both languages.

In Turkish, the subject of existential sentences — sentences denoting location, time and absolute existence — cannot be deleted although Turkish is a pro-drop language. (6) and (7) for example, would be infelicitous without their subject NPs. This comes from the fact that, the subject NP in these constructions is the third person (singular) and that Turkish third person singular has no agreement marker on the predicative element.

6. ?? Masa-da  $\emptyset$  var.<sup>1</sup>

$\emptyset$  is at the table.

7. (i) Tanrı var (dır).

There is God/ God exists.

(ii) \*  $\emptyset$  var (dır).

$\emptyset$  exists.

Deletion of the subject NP of possessive existentials, if this NP is a subject at all, is more felicitous than the existentials given above. In other words, the recoverability of the deleted NP requires less processing, partly due to the possessive marking on the possessed NP which at the same time signals the person, i.e. the content of the subject NP.

8. (i) Ali-nin kitap-ı var.

Ali has (got) book(s).

- (ii) ?Ali-nin ∅ var.

\* Ali has.

When the subject is pronominal (deictic) item, there is a marker on the predicate which agrees with the pronominal subject. Since recoverability is possible deletion is possible. Note that third person singular is a problem case in the paradigm of any nominal agreement.

9. (i) Ben var-ım.

I exist.

- (ii) ∅ var-ım.

\* exist.

Agreement is a category that Li and Thompson (1976) refer in separating topics from the subjects. They claim that subjects but not the topics obligatorily agree with the predicate. This conclusion generally holds for topic-prominent languages. Now, we have concluded before that subjects are topics in the unmarked order, the agreement of the subject in the existentials that we are discussing can be taken as another evidence for the topichood of the subjects in these sentences as well.

**In existential locatives and temporals**, the NP marked with the locative case functions as frame setting element. This is the typical property of locative marked NP: it serves the function of “frame” in a



similar fashion when it appears as the first element of the verbal sentences. The general logical property of the expression of locative construction, as argued by Hengeveld (1992) and Dik (1989), is to said to be covering the expression of existence. In other words, existential constructions can be defined as the special subtype of locative constructions in that expression of existence is actually the expression of existence in an (un)specified location. Whatever the semantic difference, frame setting NPs are always marked with the locative case marker, -DE.

The semantic interpretation of this frame, especially in locative existentials, monitors the scope of the relationship between the subject NP and the locative marked NP. That is to say, there is an automatic domain difference between the following sentences 2:

10. Üniversite'de boykot var.

University-loc boycott is

11. Masada bardak var.

Table-loc glass is

**Possessive existentials** are formed with a complex NP compound consisting of two NPs, and the predicate. In the complex NP, the possessor is marked with genitive and the possessed with possessive. Semantically, the genitive marked NP expresses the genuine possession and its referent is always definite. In traditional and contemporary grammars of Turkish, (Gencan, 1979; Banguoğlu, 1974; Lewis, 1967) the [NPgen-NPposs] complex NPs are called as *definite possessive*

*compounds*. The following definite and indefinite possessive compounds indicate the difference between the two:

12. Üniversite-nin mezunlar-ı

[the graduates of the university]

13. Üniversite—Ø mezunlar-ı

[university graduates]

14. doktor-un kız-ı

[the doctor's daughter]

15. doktor kız-ı

[any doctor's daughter]

It is a well observed phenomena that possessive NP compounds are ambiguous between two readings. In both Turkish and English, a possessive compound such as [ John's picture] encodes two readings; the compound may either refer to John as the "painter" or the "owner" of the paintings. It is thus argued that the NP marked with genitive is the subject of the compound.

Structurally, genitive and possessive marking in these compounds are the relevant grammatical categories that relate these two NPs to each other to form a syntactic unit. In Turkish in embedded nominalization, the same marking is observed: in an ordinary embedded nominal in a sentence like *Ben [ sen-in gi-tiğ-in-]i biliyorum*, the embedded subject is marked with the genitive and the nominalized form agrees with the

subject through the possessive marking. Since this is not the issue here, we will not discuss this structure and we simply take it as a sample case only.

The relevant question to this issue is that whether the possessive compound as a whole like [Ali'nin arabası] in its existential contexts is the subject. It is claimed that in possessive existentials the possessive compound as a whole can not be the subject of the sentence (Mundy 1955; Lewis 1967; Lees, 1972), because a sentence like *Ali'nin arabası var* does not express the meaning “Ali's car exists” but more like “As for Ali, there is a car of him”. If this explanation is taken to be correct, the internal construction of the existential possessives are to be analyzed as [Ali'nin] [[araba-sı] var]. To put it differently, there are two alternative analyses: one can either analyze the possessor NP as the subject, and consequently, the topic of the sentence and the possessed NP as part of the predicate, or one can simply take the compound as a whole syntactic unit and assign the whole unit the subject role, and thus the topic.

Tura (1986), from a different angle, maintains that the genitive-marked NP is the topic of the sentence — importing the term topic-genitives from (Ullian 1978) — and the possessed NP is the logical subject which is conveying the new information to any act of communication. Thus, in this perspective, in our sample compound, *Ali'nin* will be the topic-genitive, and *arabası*, the logical subject in its typical preverbal position, similar to all other existential types. Moreover, this viewpoint links the semantic status of NPs to the topic genitives by observing that the possessor NP may be definite or indefinite (e.g. *bir kadının şapkası var*) and the possessed nouns are categorial or nondefinite arguments.

These two parallel analyses of the possessive existentials leave us with the question of how to analyze the subject of the existentials when such compounds occur sentence initially. One solution to this problem comes from Schroeder (1994:234). According to him, existential sentences should be interpreted as sentences in which the subject is not the argument of the predicate but a mere modifier of it and genitives or locatives receive their topical role from the "modifier-subject". In existential possessives, the semantic relationship between the genitive attribute and the possessive-marked noun is removed and replaced by a single topic-comment relationship, in which the existential predicate and the modifier subject form the comment for the topic genitive. Therefore, *arabası* is not in a possessor-possessed relationship with *Ali'nin* but only in a topic-comment relationship. As mentioned above, in such an analysis we do not hold the meaning that "the car of Ali's exists"; such possessive existentials merely attribute the notion of existence of a car to NP Ali.

Syntactic evidence for this topic-comment (e.g., [ (NP<sub>gen</sub>) ], topic] ; [ (NP<sub>poss</sub>) Modifier subject ] - [var] ], comment) segmentation of possessive existentials comes from the observation that modifier-subject always stays preverbally even when a locative marked adverbial is inserted into the sentence. Note that locative marked adverbials can intervene between the genitive-marked noun and the possessive-marked head only in existential sentences.

16. *Ali'nin evi var.*

*Ali has a house.*

17. *Ali'nin Ankara-da evi var.*

Ali has a house in Ankara.

The conflicting approaches to the internal structure of the possessive compounds and the topichood of this construction in existentials require a further analysis of this NP.

Concluding our discussions on possessive existentials, we will review some differences in meaning in the existential possessives mainly arising from the nature of the “possessed” NP. The following sentences illustrate the situation:

18. Hasan'ın sıkıntısı / cazibesi var.

Lit. Hasan has boredom/ charm.

19. Evin bahçesi / üç odası var.

The house has a garden/ three rooms.

20. Ali'nin arkası var.

Hasan has support.

21. Hasan'ın işi var.

Hasan has a job.

22. Yerin kulağı var.

Lit. Earth has ears.

Superficially, in the above sentences, we have the same [NP<sub>gen</sub>-NP<sub>poss</sub> var] constructions. However, even a cursory observation will reveal that these sentences vary considerably and leading to different

interpretations, where in some of which, we have an absolute possessive reading and in some others this is not available. On the basis of our observations, the following facts emerge:

- (i) possessive existentials with a true possessive reading (18, 19);
- (ii) possessive existentials with a non-possessive reading (20, 22);
- (iii) possessive existentials with both readings (21).

In (18), and (19) the notion of “ownership” expressed in different manners, suggesting a “scale” in the expression of this notion. In (18) what is possessed is an abstract entity, that is, the feelings, or appearance. Speakers using such existentials do not simply report the belonging of X to Y but give more information about the attitudes, manners, and the like of X.

In (19) the possessor is an [- human], [- animate] entity, a house with a garden — a house “owns” a garden. In such a case, one could not mention a genuine ownership that is exploited by the [+ human], [+ animate] possessor. Broadly speaking, the relation holding between an [- human], [- animate] possessor and the [- human], [- animate] possessed NPs is that of a part-whole. The possessed noun should be the part of the possessor.

(20) and (22), on the other hand, do not express possession at all. In these “possessive existential” sentences, there is no reading of possession whatsoever. More like an idiomatic expression, (20) expresses someone's

affiliate in some institution or some powerful acquaintance at his disposal, and (22) cannot be assigned a compositional reading.

(21) embodies either a possessive reading or a non-possessive one depending on the potential referents of the possessive marked noun. Such that, (i) Hasan has his own business ; he is the employer; (ii) Hasan has something to do, or more like he is in trouble; (iii) Hasan has a job, he is an employee.

In short, even this limited data reveals that the variety in the interpretation in possessive compounds arises from the ambiguity they encode structurally. This ultimately comes from the semantic properties of the NPs in question. In its extreme case, some forms of these compounds require a very specialized contexts for the proper interpretation. For example, in the compound *Ahmet'in televizyonu*, *Ahmet* stands either as the owner of a TV set or a TV company or station.<sup>3</sup>

Pragmatically, the existentials have two primary functions:

**1. Expression of Existence.** These sentences state or approve the existence or non-existence of an entity in some location or in time or existence of possession. Expressions of existence do not require the subject NP to be marked with number so the subject NP is mostly categorial.

23 Dolapta yemek var.

There is (some) food in the fridge.

**2. Presentative existentials** introduce or present new concepts to the discourse within which they are embedded. In this frame, the subject of

the presentative existentials can not be considered as topic where the topic is defined something as given information or it is considered as a concept which has the binary features of *discourse-old* and *hearer-old*. In traditional terms, such sentences are defined as topicless. In this interpretation, the “topic” of presentational existentials cannot be analyzed within sentence boundaries.

However, as we have indicated above, functional grammar deals with the presentative existentials from a broader perspective and offers the term New Topic. As such, Dik (1989:179) stresses the role of *new topic's* position in the strategies for introducing, maintaining and renewing ‘discourse topics’. The subject of the presentative existentials is marked with number — indefinite article — which accords with its New Topic identity. Simply because New Topic is typically considered not to be available for the hearer, it is marked indefinite. Relevant examples are given below:

24. Okulda bir bilgisayar var, onunla çalışıyoruz.

There is a computer at school, we are working with it.

25. Tiyatroda bir oyun var, gidebiliriz.

There is a play at the theater, we may go.

We end our analysis of existentials here and present some of our conclusions:

1. In the locative and possessive existentials, the subject NP may be either definite or indefinite. When it is indefinite, the frame establishing element helps to make entity in question identifiable to the addressee



either by asserting its existence or by relating it to notions of location or possession. This means that, for example, in the locative existentials, the NP which is marked with the locative renders the entity which is indefinite into a more identifiable one by specifying its location as well as its existence. Thus, in a sentence like *Masada bir bardak var*, the indefinite subject NP within the frame established by the locative marked NP which is the entity known to the addressee, becomes more “identifiable” (Rijkhoff, 1988, in Hengeveld 1992:85).

2. The notion of New Topic as discussed by the functional grammarians provides a broader perspective for the subject NP of the locatives and temporals in that, as opposed to traditional understanding, these sentences are held to be introducing New Topic into the discourse. It is for this reason that they cannot be replaced by a semantically nonreferential “dummy” element, neither can they be deleted.

3. The arguments concerning the topichood of possessive existentials in Turkish is an issue yet to be settled. We have presented the approaches to this issue and here do not make any further comment and leave the issue for a further research. However, initially we can say that, structurally, the complex possessive NP functions as a surface subject in its totality and thus semantically it may also be treated as single “referential” unit, identifying a single referent in the universe.

### 3. 2. 1. 2. Substantives

Substantives, as opposed to existentials are discussed in the literature in a relatively detailed manner. Following are the basic substantive constructions that we will analyse:

26. NP NP

Ayşe öğretmen

27. NP Adj

Ayşe güzel

28. NP NP<sub>loc</sub>

bardak masa-da

29. NP NP<sub>loc temp</sub>

Otobüs beşte

30. NP NP<sub>gen</sub>

kitap Ali-nin

In substantives, the predicate is either a noun or nominal or an adjective that modify, describe or classify the subject NP. The semantic relation between the predicate and the subject is realized in different types. Among these relations, the three of them is similar to those expressed in existentials — locative (28), temporal (29) and possessive (30) copulars. In all these types, the subject NP is definite; it is impossible to mark it with an indefinite NP or with any other semantically indefinite

determiners, e.g., *bazı*. Contrary to existentials, location, temporal relation or possession do not have the frame estabbling function: here they act as the predicative element of the sentence.

31. i. Beşte otobüs var.

There is a bus at five.

ii. Otobüs beşte.

The bus is at five.

32. i. Masada bardak var.

There is a glass on the table.

ii. Bardak masada.

The glass is on the table.

33. i. Ali'nin parası var.

Ali has money.

ii. Para Ali'nin.

The money is Ali's.

As these examples indicate, the most crucial distinction between these two types of structures is that whereas in existentials, the subject NPs can be categorial and/or indefinite, they can never be in substantive sentences.

In substantive possessives, the possessed NP functions as the subject. Semantically, there are restrictions on the possessed NP, i.e., the subject predicate relation should express genuine ownership. This property of substantive sentences differs them from the possessive existentials where the existence of possession is less unambiguous.<sup>4</sup> In other words, this relation is sensitive to the animacy of the nominals involved; when both nominals are animate and human, for example, the dominant relationship is defined as “inalienable” possession relation.

34. \*Amca Ayşe'nin .

\* The uncle is Ayşe's.

Semantic relations between subject and the predicate in copular sentences, other than those stated above, are generally divided into two broad categories:<sup>5</sup>

i. Qualitative

ii. Equative

Basically, in the qualitative relationship, the predicate assigns, among others, a specific quality or a status to its subject NP. Thus, the predicative NP is always non-referential. Moreover the predicate can classify its subject due to its lexical specification.

It is the adjectival predicates that assign qualities of some sort, depending on its lexical properties, to its subject NP.

35. Çocuk küçük.

The kid is small.

36. Demir kızgın.

The iron is hot.

The ordering possibilities of such sentences are quite restricted in that a change of places render the construction to simple modifier-modified structure as observed in the simple adjective-noun compounds:

37. Küçük çocuk

Small kid

38. Kızgın demir

Hot iron

The nominal predicate assigns status when it predicates "membership of some established functional, professional, or ideological group" (Hengeveld 1992:76 cited in Schroeder 1994:87).

39. Adalet Ağaoğlu yazar.

Adalet Ağaoğlu is an author.

When the article *bir* is used in the nominal predicate, the semantic relation *classification* is achieved.

40. Adalet Ağaoğlu bir yazar.

Adalet Ağaoğlu is an author.

The predicate not only conveys the status of the subject but also it classifies the subject NP as a member of a certain class as opposed to

other classes (Tura 1973, Csato 1988). That is to say, Adalet Ağaoğlu is a *writer* not a *driver*, or a *politician*, etc.

Equative relations between the nominal predicate and the subject NP is that of the specification. "In specifications the referent of the subject of the copular sentence is identical to the referent of the predicate." (Hengeveld 1992:86 cited in Schroeder 1994:89). The predicative nominal in such constructions can be read as definite referential NP and thus reversing the order will have effects on the definiteness of this nominal.

Common to all non-verbal sentences is the property that both in existentials and substantives, the predicative element cannot assign semantic roles. In other words, the predicative element in such sentences, as opposed to verbal sentences with a lexical verb as a predicate, does not denote an activity, process and the like which requires participants with specific semantic and grammatical roles. The subject NPs of these sentences, for example, cannot be taken as "agent", among other possible semantic roles that subjects may express in verbal sentences. Other NPs that may be found in these sentences also lack a semantic role; their mere existence is to specify the "frame" within which predication holds.

In the substantives, as opposed to existentials, the subject NP of the adjectival and nominal predicates are almost always definite, or at least specific. This, in effect, says that in a sentence like *Otobüs beşte*, the subject NP can never receive indefinite or non-specific reading. Nor can these subject NPs be stripped off their definiteness property since they do not permit the indefinitivizer *bir* to occur with them.

41. (a) Otobüs beşte.

(b) \* Bir otobüs beşte.

As indicated by Tura (1986) the sentences as (b) can only be grammatical in “list reading”.

42. Bir otobüs beşte, bir otobüs altıda.

A bus is at five, another is at six .

Dik (1989:180) summarizes the types of semantic relations in non-verbal sentences, both existentials and substantives:

| <u>Type of predicate</u>  | <u>Semantic relation</u> |
|---------------------------|--------------------------|
| adjectival/bare nominal   | Property assignment      |
| indefinite term           | Class inclusion          |
| definite term             | Identification           |
| possessor term            | Possession               |
| locative term             | Location/existence       |
| unspecified locative term | Existence                |

Note that some of the semantic relations that we have discussed in this section are grouped under one relation in this table. Additionally, in Turkish locative existentials may also be used to express possession.

### 3. 2. 2. Intransitives

The study of intransitives in Turkish mainly concentrates on two related issues: first, most of the intransitive clauses in Turkish can passivize, and related to this property, the second issue concerns the semantics of the intransitive clauses, more specifically the content of the semantic role of the subject NP.

In this section we will focus on the conditions underlying the topichood of the subject NP in intransitives. Three aspects of NP semantics seem to be the defining criteria in most cases in studies of intransitives. The first one concerns the semantic role of the subject NP. Depending on the particular semantic role the subject NP bears in the intransitive sentences the other constituents of the sentence can move to different positions and thus lead to different readings. Second, it is the value that the subject NP is assigned in terms of definiteness and animacy that decides on the scrambling of constituents, including the subject NP itself. In other words, subject NP can occur in different positions in the sentence by virtue of being [ $\pm$  animate] or [ $\pm$  definite]. The third factor that effects intransitives concerns the oblique NPs and their interaction with the subject NP as well as the predicate in the sentence.



### 3. 2. 2. 1. Semantics of Intransitive Predicates

Basically, intransitive sentences appear with one NP and a predicate. The single NP occurs as the subject of the sentence, and depending on the type of the predicate, oblique NPs can be inserted into the sentence.

Ever since Perlmutter (1978), intransitives are classified into two distinct groups. Those that lack the initial 1 are called unaccusatives and that those that lack initial 2 are called unergatives. The terms 1 and 2 are the terms of Relational Grammar, indicating subject and object roles respectively. The distinction, as Perlmutter indicates, corresponds to the previous distinction between activity and non-activity intransitives. The distinction is argued to be recoverable from the semantics of the clause. Below are the samples of some unergative and unaccusative intransitives:

#### Unergatives:

- a. Willed or volitional acts: work, play, speak, smile, grin, think, laugh, dance, etc.
- b. manner of speaking verbs: whisper, shout, etc.
- c. sounds made by animals: bark, neigh, roar, etc.
- d. certain bodily processes: cough, sneeze, sleep, cry, etc.

**Unaccusatives** include a larger class among which are the predicates expressed by adjectives in English, like size, shape, color, state of mind, etc.; predicates whose initial nuclear term is semantically a patient; class of inchoatives, predicates of existing and happening; involuntarily

emission of stimuli that impinge on the senses; aspectual predicates and duratives.

The Unaccusative Hypothesis as advanced by Perlmutter, however, does not claim that these predicates appear similar in all languages. In other words, a particular unaccusative predicate for example, may not be an unaccusative in another language. The studies on Turkish data (Özkaragöz, 1986; Knecht, 1986) conclude that this distinction has relevance for Turkish in that the universal claim that unaccusatives cannot passivize holds for Turkish together with other languages. Here, the semantic role of the subject NP will be our primary concern and thus we will not refer to the Unaccusative Hypothesis in no other place. The issue is a complicated one and there is much debate on the initial unergativity or unaccusativity of Turkish intransitive predicates. Kornfilt (1991) for example, argues that the arguments advanced in favor of the validity of the distinction between unaccusatives and unergatives in Turkish are far from being satisfactory given the fact that many of the criteria apply ambiguously in different predicates. Thus without a thorough analysis and a classification of intransitive predicates, it is not possible to arrive at acceptable conclusions. The classification of intransitives on the basis of their structural and semantic properties requires further research which extends beyond the scope of this study. In the second part of this study we will refer to the role of oblique context created by the intransitives predicates which we think may be applied as one of those criteria in such classification.

Intransitives in Erguvanlı (1984) appear in a number of places and the major conclusion that is drawn from the analysis is given below:

43. Indefinite subject NPs that are [ - animate] are restricted to the immediately preverbal position (1984:17)

The analysis of intransitives in Erguvanlı is not sensitive to the major semantic distinction drawn between the intransitive predicates as discussed above. The intransitives such as *rüzgar es-*, *su ak-*, and *düşmek*, *koşmak*, and *pişmek*, for example, are analyzed without making reference to differences in their semantics. The only reference in this respect is made in a footnote where the distinction is drawn between impersonal verbs and intransitive verbs in terms of passivization. Erkö (1983) on the other hand, makes almost no reference to the intransitives and the topicality of intransitive subjects.

In the following section we will illustrate that Erguvanlı's conclusion holds true only partially and depending on the semantics of the predicate, indefinite [ - animate ] subjects can occur sentence initially.

### 3.2.2.2. Obliques and Semantic Bondedness

Intransitives with the indefinite [ - animate ] subjects that appear in Erguvanlı (1984) are listed below:

44. \*Bir tavuk tencerede pişiyor

A chicken is cooking in the pot.

45. \* Bir rüzgar akşamları burada esiyor

A wind blows here in the evening.

46. \* Bir yığın kağıt masamda birikmiş

A heap of paper has collected on my desk.

47. \* Bir damla su musluktan akıyor

Not one drop of water is coming (flowing) from the tap.

48. \* Bir elma ağaçtan düştü

An apple fell from the tree.

All these sentences which are marked as ungrammatical are felicitous with the indefinite [ - animate ] subject NPs occurring preverbally. In addition to the condition that Erguvanlı derives from the observations on these sentences ( (43) above) a possible explanation to the “curious” phenomena is also provided : since sentence initial position is a topic position, as an inherent property of the natural topics, animate NPs have priority over inanimate NPs in occurring topic position. The indefinite [+ animate ] NPs are not subject to the restriction of occurring sentence-initially:

49. Bir kadın bize doğru koşuyor.

A woman is running toward us.

50. Bir çocuk ağaçtan düştü.

A child fell out of the tree.

Note that the particular semantic role of the subject NP appears to play no significant role here. In other words, where in (49) the subject NP bears an agent role (i.e. unergative), it is patient in (50). Since they both are [+ animate], in spite of being indefinite, they are allowed to occur sentence-initially and function as sentence topics.

As indicated in Erguvanlı (1984) in sentence with the structure NP-V (where V is a intransitive verb) the preverbal and the sentence-initial positions are the same positions. Thus as opposed to subject incorporation structures where the subject NP is both [ $\pm$  animate] and [- definite], the position of indefinite subject is not applicable here. Recall that in the previous sections we have indicated, following Tura (1973), that word order has a definitivizing function and when applied to this context, the removal of the indefinitivizer *bir* in the example sentences (44-48) above would render them more felicitous.

It then appears that, if the sentence-initial and preverbal distinction do not apply here, the properties of intervening material may have some consequences in the interpretation of these structures. Below we will refer to the notion of *semantic bondedness* in the oblique contexts created by the intransitive verb and due to the semantics of predicates in question we will see that indefinite [- animate ] subject NPs may occur sentence initially.

Starting from the last two sentences above (48) and (50), we observe that an intransitive predicate like *düşmek* does not impose selectional restriction on the subject NP. In other words, its subject NP may be either animate or inanimate. Additionally, common, plural or generic NPs, may occur as subject NPs with metaphorical reading: *Fiyatlar*

*düştü*, *enflasyon düştü*, etc. In sum, *düşmek* as a predicate allows almost all possible NPs as its subject. This is partly because it has causative connotations. Inevitably, however, all subject NPs will bear the patient role. *Koşmak*, on the other hand, is an “agentive” verb, requires obligatorily animate agent: an inanimate subject NP will always require a metaphorical reading, whereas *pişmek* of (46) definitely requires a “non-agentive” subject. All these suggest that, besides other arguments, the oblique NPs that can occur with these predicates will differ and play the decisive role.

Here we will try to display that the obliques that occur with the intransitive predicates establish a “basic” order and on the basis of this order, the subject NP regardless of its [ $\pm$  animate] feature can move to the topic position. Another criterion that will be important will concern the semantics of the subject NP, namely that a [- animate], [- definite] NP when occurs with an adnominal attributive modifier will gain back what it has lost in the sentence. For the first argument, insertion of the dative NP instead of ablative NP will render (48) above grammatical. In the same manner, a prenominal modifier will render the sentence grammatical in (44):

51. Bir elma yere düştü.

An apple fell to the ground.

52. İrice bir tavuk tencerede pişiyor.

A big chicken is cooking in the pot.

Thus, the above sentences clearly indicate without doubt that besides the notions of animacy and definiteness, there are other features of NP semantics and predicate frame that become affective in the grammaticality and hence topicality of the subject NPs in intransitive sentences in Turkish. (51) illustrates that the oblique NP has its own effects regardless of animacy and definiteness, and (52) indicates that indefinite specific NPs can function as sentence topic.

To test our arguments, we will take four intransitive predicates and the oblique NPs that can go along with these predicates. Observe below *pişmek* and *yanmak* on the one hand, and *gitmek* and *dalmak* on the other:

53. Tavuk tencerede pişiyor.

Chicken is cooking in the pot.

54. \*Tavuk tencereye pişiyor.

55. \*Tavuk tencereden pişiyor.

56. Köşede ev yanıyor.

In the corner, a house is burning.

57. \*Köşeye ev yanıyor.

58. \*Köşeden ev yanıyor.

59. Köşede bir ev yanıyor.

In the corner, a house is burning.

60. \* Bir ev köşede yanıyor.

The above sentences indicate that both *pişmek* and *yanmak* behave identically with respect to (i) oblique NPs that they allow, i.e., both allow only locative NP and reject ablative and dative; (ii) their subjects are carrying the same semantic relation, i.e., both are patients as a property of unaccusative verbs; (iii) they both require non-human agents ( does not mean -animate). The apparent generalization here is that inanimate indefinite subjects cannot be moved to the topic position. To this far, Erguvanlı's conclusion holds true. However, contra to Erguvanlı, we will claim that these subject NPs are not restricted to the preverbal position only:

61. Tencerede pişiyor bir tavuk.

62. Köşede yanıyor bir ev.

To put it differently, in intransitives, inanimate indefinite subject NPs can occur postverbally other than preverbally, which is their typical position.

The more comprehensive generalization may be derived by referring to the semantics of the intransitive verbs. All the above observed properties of *pişmek* and *yanmak* derive from their natural class, i.e., they are both unaccusatives. It appears that once the semantics and syntactics of the verb is settled, the other properties will be expected to follow. Thus, it seems that it is possible to account for all the above linguistic facts an



explanation only if the semantics and syntactics of the predicate are taken into consideration.

To illustrate the linguistic facts that derive from the verb semantics and syntactics, we will now take two “activity” intransitive verbs. In the below examples there are two unergative verbs:

63. Otobüs yola gidiyor<sup>6</sup>.

The bus is travelling to a destination.

64. Otobüs yolda gidiyor.

65. Otobüs yoldan gidiyor.

66. Denizaltı suya daldı.

Submarine dived into the water.

67. Denizaltı açıkta daldı.

68. Denizaltı açıktan daldı.

These two verbs, as a first observation, behave differently than the unaccusatives we have given above, at least in one respect, i.e., they allow other obliques than locative. Leaving the status of locative aside for the moment, we will comment on other differences.

The most striking difference that such intransitives display is that when indefinitivized their subjects can occur in other syntactic positions than the preverbal position.:

69. Bir otobüs yola/yolda/yoldan gidiyor.

70. Bir denizaltı suya/açıkta/açıktan daldı .

These examples appear to provide counterexamples to the conclusion that indefinite inanimate subject NPs cannot occur sentence initially. Recall that this restriction was explained through a specific property to topics, i.e., since sentence-initial position is the topic position, inanimate indefinite NPs are rejected in this position, and animacy is defined as the relevant criteria in terms of topic interpretation. Observe further that, similar to unaccusative intransitives, indefinite subjects of *gitmek* and *dalmak* can also be moved to postpredicate position.

Coming back to differences and similarities between these verbs and unaccusatives, as well as the similarities between *dalmak* and *gitmek* display, the following facts emerge: (i) Both *dalmak* and *gitmek* impose no restriction on the subject NP's semantic role and also on the animacy of the subject NP. Both may occur with animate and non-animate NPs as opposed to the restriction on subject NPs in unaccusatives, *pişmek* and *yanmak*. The inanimate subjects do not lead to metaphorical reading <sup>7</sup>. (ii) Depending on the animacy of the subject NP, this NP either receives agent or instrument role where they are always patients with the unaccusatives. Whatever the role of the subject NP, any of the oblique NPs can occur in the sentence.

The tentative conclusion concerning intransitives and topicality will be that the role and the syntactic position of the subject NPs in intransitives determined by the semantics of the predicate. Without going into theoretical discussions of the *activity* vs. *non-activity* intransitives and taking this distinction as a relevant one, we can summarize our observations:

1. The non-activity intransitive predicates allow only patient subjects, whereas activity intransitives are more relaxed in terms of the possible semantics roles of their subject NPs. In all cases, there is action described by the verb and the subject NP, in a broader sense, can be interpreted as the instigator of the action.
2. Since patient subjects are generally inanimate, it follows that the restriction for the indefinite inanimate patient subjects of intransitives derives from their semantics.
3. Non-activity predicates, by definition do not express any activity and thus allow only locative oblique NPs to occur with them, whereas the activity intransitive predicates allow all possible obliques even the instrumentals.
4. Based on the above considerations, the relevant conclusion will be that the movement of a subject NP to topic position in intransitives derives its properties from the semantics of the verb. Animacy and definiteness explain the facts to a certain extent but not appear as the decisive criteria for the proper generalization.

The role of the oblique context also provides another ground for the analysis of the intransitives. A classification can be made simply by

examining which intransitives predicates allow which obliques in the contexts that they create. We have already seen that *pişmek* and *yanmak* allow only locative NPs to occur in their contexts. *Oturmak* and *yerleşmek* on the other hand, share the property of allowing dative and locative NPs, rejecting others and thus in some contexts can be used interchangeably. Our sample verb, *dalmak*, for example allows all possible obliques and even allow all to occur in a sentence:

71. Ali kumsalda kayadan suya daldı .

Ali dived into the water on the beach from a rock .

Siewierska (1988:55) indicates that there is some significance in the relevant ordering of the *obliques* (adverbials) in the sentences. Languages display varieties in terms of the relevant ordering of the obliques. Some adverbials are favored to others in the linearization, for example, English favors sequencing **instrumental > spatial > temporal**, whereas Slavic languages are argued to be favoring time-before-place sequencing. The important factor here is that the relative order and location of these constituents indicate their degree of “semantic bondedness” to the verb. Those that are more closely related to the semantic specification of the verb tend to occur more closely to the verb relative to others. This does not mean that if there is some preference to the ordering in this sense, other possible orders are most readily canceled out. On the contrary, the possible orders do not lead to ungrammaticality. For example, in English instrument > spatial > temporal sequencing can occur in all possible ordering:

72. He was working *with his shears in the garden the whole morning*

- i. ... with his shears the whole morning in the garden
- ii. ... the whole morning with his shears in the garden
- iii. ... the whole morning in the garden with his shears
- iv. ... in the garden with his shear the whole morning
- v. ... in the garden the whole morning with his shears

The fact that NPs that are selected by the verb and thus arguments are more tightly ordered as opposed to adjuncts as above holds crosslinguistically. However, no matter how free their ordering possibilities, the preference for one order instead of another order might be suggestive. Siewierska, for example, indicates that the more closely semantically bound adverbials are also less susceptible to fronting than are evident adverbials of setting. The relevant question here we will be to what extent this intuitive notion may be suggestive for the case in Turkish. *Dalmak*, as indicated above allows all obliques in Turkish ( we will discard instrumental here):

73. ... kumsal-da kaya-dan su-ya dal-

dive into the water on the beach from a rock

The relevant order appears as:

74. **location > source > direction**

Among these obliques *direction* stands as the closest the verb. Intuitively, we may say that when forming a sentence the verb *dalmak* will be favoring direction NP more prominently than the others. Though it

requires a statistical study, the initial observation seems to be true, at least in the cases where the verb combines with a noun to form compounds or idioms.

More importantly for the present study is the interaction between oblique context, predicate type and semantics of the subject NP. For the following examples, Erguvanlı claims that animacy is the key factor for the topicality:

75. Bir çocuk ağaçtan düştü .

76. \*Bir elma ağaçtan düştü .

What renders (76) as unacceptable is explained through (43). However, as we have indicated through (50) the facts are more complicated. Keeping semantics features of the subject NP constant and simply substituting a directional oblique derives a structure where indefinite inanimate subject NP occurs in the typical topic position. We have already indicated above that although animacy and definiteness of topic NPs are important factors in Turkish intransitives, the verbs semantics says the last word. Here again we see the fact that besides animacy and definiteness the oblique context created by the intransitive is also important. The explanatory facts will derive from the oblique context that *düşmek* creates, since indefinite inanimate subject NP in the topic is perfectly felicitous with direction oblique not with the source NP. Here, as it appears, we have to refer to “semantic bondedness”. For all types of subject NPs, the verb *düşmek*, similar to *dalmak*, allows all obliques in a sentence in which it is the predicate:

77. Ali bahçede ağaçtan yere düştü .

the “preferred order” thus is as follows:

location > source > direction

If we take the verb *düşmek* designating some motion that is taking place, even in the expense of a patient subject, it incorporates at least two notions: “place from” and “place to”.<sup>8</sup> Since location is a very broad conceptual category and can appear with all verbs alike, it is not expected for location to play some role in our sample case. Leaving aside location, the remaining two notions are indicating the starting point and the end point of the action, no matter how involuntarily it is initiated. The starting point is signaled by the ablative and the end point with the dative.

The same NP with the same semantic properties in the same syntactic place will give a grammatical sentence with a particular oblique but not with other. This situation needs an explanation and it appears that the semantic bondedness of obliques play a role here. Note that ablative marked structure is ungrammatical and the dative marked is grammatical. More importantly, topic interpretation is available with the dative whereas is not available with the ablative. Thus, the importance of the oblique NP and the semantic bondedness hierarchy alongside with the definiteness and animacy is clearly established. Ablative ranks “low” relative to the dative in terms of its closeness to the verb *düşmek* in the hierarchy. One final point here concerns the notion of aspect in the sense that the past tense marker in *düştü* reports the action from the endpoint, i.e., completion is expressed. Thus, although we will not refer to *modality context* in our arguments, selection of dative

marked oblique NP which is more close to the point of completion becomes more clear.

Concluding our remarks on the intransitives and aspects of topicality in intransitive clauses in Turkish, we have indicated that definiteness and animacy play an important role in the topic interpretation. We have also argued that there are additional factors involved in intransitives that are not referred in Erguvanlı (1984) which are important in the interpretation of intransitive subject. First, indefinite [- animate] subject NPs are not restricted to the sentence initial position; they may well occur post-verbally. Second, indefinite [- animate] subject NPs when specific can occur sentence initially quite felicitously. Third, depending on the semantics of the intransitive predicate, i.e., action vs. non-action, the oblique context created is effective in the judgments of grammaticality.

### **3.3. Transitives and Sentence Topic**

The definition of the unmarked order we have given in the previous chapter is based on the transitive clause. Actually, the majority of the arguments concerning both grammatical organization of the sentences and topic interpretation alike concern transitive clauses. Before we proceed to the our analysis of sentence topics in transitive sentences, we will refer to some functional universals related to the structure of



transitive clauses and different markings in the change of information flow.

### **3.3.1. Functional Universals and Word Order**

Comrie (1988) claims that any structural property of a language can be taken as a parameter for typology. Concerning the parameters of word order, ever since Greenberg's approach, grammatical roles and their relative ordering, especially the ordering of object NP with respect to the verb constitutes the major parameter. A number of so-called Implicational universal are also formulated on the basis of ordering universals based on the major grammatical roles.

The functional approach to ordering phenomena differs from the formal approaches in a number of respects<sup>9</sup>. One major difference, in fact, sums up both the motivations and conclusions in both types of universals. For the functionalist, the existence of a specific form can only be explained through its function and functions expressed through the use of formal devices can best be understood in a communicative context which requires reference to the discourse. Both Comrie (1981) and Croft (1990) as representatives of the functional approach to universals claim that many grammatical categories are identified crosslinguistically by semantic means and this approach receives no objection. It appears that, especially in the case of grammatical roles, identification of such categories cannot be maintained without referring to the semantic and pragmatic roles that are associated with such structural categories.

Croft (1990:13) illustrates the case in point by referring to the grammatical role of subject: “ ... across languages, the grammatical role of subject is expressed structurally in several different ways: by case/adposition marking, by indexation or agreement, by word order, or by combination of both of these. Yet, how does one ‘know’ this in the first place? Only by using a heuristic definition involving external function, including some notion of ‘agent of action’ and ‘topic of the sentence’, among other things, to determine what is a ‘subject’ in each language.” This understanding can be extended to other structural properties, given the functionalist view that grammatical structures are adaptations to the basic human need of communication.

We have already mentioned the linearization hierarchies that aim at capturing the regularities in ordering of constituents in a sentence. If the structure of language reflects the properties of the universe and the ways which we perceive them, the expression of these reflection and their linearization would ultimately dominate all the possible orderings. For this reason, Allan (1987) places the familiarity hierarchies over the dominance and formal hierarchies, since discoursial considerations override the purely semantic and syntactic considerations in human communication. It is humans who enter into a discourse and thus familiarity as a speaker oriented variable will have more impact in the selection and ordering of constituents of a sentence than the notions that the other hierarchies express.

Thus we have a functional explanation why subjects tend to occur before the object in a sentence in most of the languages of the world. In the previous chapter we have referred to those studies concerning human

cognitive processes and accessibility of the information bearing elements. The correlation between these cognitive considerations and the interaction between agentivity, animacy and definiteness identifies subject NP as the natural topic.

The second part of the definition of basic order refers to the semantic roles, i.e., subjects are generally identified through the semantic role of agent. Crosslinguistically, it is argued that if a transitive verb has an agent role to assign, it will be assigned to the subject NP. Here, agency and animacy display high level of correlation. Although the accessibility of other constituents other than the agent to subject position varies from language to language, the notion of agency is commonly associated with animacy, or more properly, with human agents. The inanimate or abstract entities when they occur as the subject of sentence receive metaphorical reading, given the fact that they affect humans in a rather limited manner. Thus, the human bias in this sense is captured in the person hierarchy which expresses the overlap between semantic roles, animacy and subject selection.

### **The Person Hierarchy**

1st person > 2nd person > 3rd person human > higher animals > other organisms > inorganic matter > abstracts

### **The Animacy Hierarchy**

human > other animal > inanimate

To sum the basics of functional approach to language universals, we may say that proper treatment of formal categories follows from the

functions that are taken to be serving. When it comes to the linearization of the major constituents of the sentence, the functionally oriented principles that we have indicated above, play the decisive role overriding formal considerations.

### 3.3.2. Rich Case vs. Poor Case

Greenberg's *universal 41* asserts that "If in a language the verb follows both the nominal subject and nominal object as the dominant order, the language almost always has a case system." The SOV languages generally incorporate in their grammatical system a rich case system as opposed to SVO languages where case system appears to be very poor. The existence or non-existence of a rich case system has some important consequences in the other components of the grammar, most obvious in the organization of sentence structure and variations that may depart from the basic order. Here we will review affects of case system on the ordering of elements in a sentence.

Some of the observed differences that are attributed to the case system are as follows:

- free word order
- zero (null) anaphora
- syntactic movement

It is argued that, though it is not the ultimate criterion, rich case system languages tend to have more free word order than those with poor case

systems. Turkish and English can be taken as the representatives of this distinction respectively. Richness and poorness of case system and its impact on freeness or fixedness of word order are explained through the method of marking of the grammatical roles. In its simplest sense, if a language marks its grammatical roles morphologically, these arguments can scramble and their change of places do not lead to the change in the grammatical roles. This in turn means, among many other things, that change in the places of grammatical roles preserves the compositional or propositional meaning of the sentences. Ultimately, languages with rich case systems have options that are not available to poor case system languages in terms of coding the information structure. The most extreme case in this respect is the languages with *morphological topic marker*.

The second property again attributed to the quality of case system of languages is the so called null or zero anaphora. It is a common property for many languages with rich agreement systems to drop the subject NP in the root clauses. Among such languages, there are many which are not genetically and areally related. Italian and Turkish, for example, are both categorized as *Null Subject Languages*. Though it is possible for many languages to drop the subject NP<sup>10</sup>, it is only those languages with rich case system that can drop the object argument. Turkish and Japanese share this property, as members of rich case languages.

The third argument concerns the existence or non-existence of syntactic movement in rich case system languages. If a language has means of alternative ways of encoding information structure, does it need grammatical function changing rules at all? In other words, it is argued that since it is an option for rich case system languages to reorder the

sentential constituents without altering the grammatical and hence semantic roles, they do not need obligatory syntactic movement of NPs as the poor case system languages do. After all, syntactic movement appears as the only way of alternative ways of encoding information structure for poor case system languages.

Having initially set the ground for the further discussion of properties of the languages in terms of the case systems, we will now proceed on how case systems affects the packaging of the flow of information.

### **3.3.3. Free vs. Fixed Word Order**

Comrie (1981:60) argues that grammatical relations cannot be understood in their entirety unless they are related to semantic and pragmatic roles. He further asserts that, " ... many facets of subjecthood can be understood by regarding the prototype of subject as the interaction of agent and topic." This in effect means that, syntactic, semantic and pragmatic markings are mutually dependent, at least in the case of prototypical marking. In the unmarked case, sentence subjects are sentence topics and they are assigned the agent role. The case system of the language is important in this sense that, especially in the traditional approaches one-to-one relations are established between case marking, grammatical and semantic roles. This, in turn means that, in a rich case system language, an NP which is marked with the subjective case will automatically be marked for the agent role, and since subjects are topics

in the unmarked case topics are thus identified. However, this is not a situation without exceptions.

To illustrate the differences between fixed and free orders, we will take English as the sample case. In a poor case system language like English, word order is the only carrier of grammatical relations. In other words, subject and object NPs have fixed syntactic slots and simply by being there they receive their relevant grammatical role. Subject, in the unmarked simplex sentence precedes the verb and the object follows.

78.        John kissed Mary.

79.        Mary kissed John.

Both (78) and (79) above contain the same number of constituents and the identical lexical items. Yet these two sentences are radically different in their meanings. The change in the “syntactic” places of the NPs in the English sentence, if not yields to ungrammaticality, causes a radical change in the interpretation of the sentence. In (78) it was John who was the “kisser” and Mary the “kissed”. In (79) though the individuals are one and the same as well as the action described remains the same, this time it is Mary who receives the “kisser” role and John the “kissed”. In other words, changing the order of the constituents means changing the grammatical roles of these constituents and hence their semantic roles. The resulting structure, no matter how it is similar to the unaltered one and contains the identical elements, will be expressing a whole a new meaning. It is thus its syntactic position that decides the NPs particular grammatical, semantic and pragmatic role.

Even in the *subject-auxiliary inversion*, a very common case in English, this order is preserved:

80. *John* is reading *a book*.

81. Is *John* reading *a book* ?

Fixing the grammatical roles to syntactic positions, inevitably means fixing the relevant order of the semantic roles. Comrie (1981) argues that reference to the semantic roles in terms of precedence relations as an alternative way of looking the order of grammatical roles, is not correct. The semantics of predicate in cases where, especially the subject is assigned a semantic role different than that of agent, would count the approach to word order in terms of semantic roles counter-intuitive. The following illustrates the point:

82. *Harry* saw *John*.

83. *The ball* hit *Mary*.

where in (82) the subject NP carries experiencer role, and in (83) it is the instrument role that the subject NP expresses.

Still another very common case where the precedence relation between the semantic roles is altered is the passive. Here it is the patient that precedes the verb and the agent follows:

84. *Mary* was kissed by *John*.

85. *John* was kissed by *Mary*.



English case system only marks the pronouns. In other words, overt morphological marking occurs only with pronouns, and as Comrie (1981) argues case marking has a marginal role.

86. I saw him.

87. He saw me.

Even this marking does not help English to change the word order freely, i.e., without altering the grammatical roles:

88. \*Him I saw.

89. \*Me saw him.

Final point that Comrie (1981) refers where case marking has some relevance to marking grammatical roles arises in limited contexts, mostly in colloquial uses. He notes that in the following pairs, it not very clear whether users of English consistently differentiate the structures in production and in comprehension:

90. John knows more people than I ( than I do).

91. John knows more people than me ( he doesn't just know me).

All these are taken be the illustrative cases that, lack of rich case system makes such languages like English refers to the syntactic position in marking the grammatical roles. It follows from here that in the expression of pragmatic roles, English syntax plays a rather limited role. A simple change in the order of the constituents creates a completely new topic-comment structure which is by no means related to the basic order from which the marked order is derived, if it is the case.

It will become more clear in the following discussions that there are other ways and means available to English to reorder the flow of information. The so-called **transitivity alternations**, for example, provides English unique ways of expressing the information without changing the “voice.” Take the following example:

92.       The sun radiates heat.

93.       The heat radiates from the sun.

Note that the Turkish equivalents of this pair requires a change in the *voice* where there is no indication of a change of voice in English sentences.

Thus, in the above and other similar contexts, English has other means of expressing the same semantic content. The choice that is to be made between alternative syntactic means of encoding the same semantic content is determined by pragmatic considerations. In such cases, the preference is to make topic the subject whenever it is possible. Thus, as in the case of “natural” topics, the subject and topic are correlated as a consequence of a pragmatic choice.

Yet still one important point of compensation for languages like English, as argued by typologists, is that the number of different semantic roles that can be assigned to subject NP in English is not so restricted as it seems to be in rich case system languages. This point will be more clear especially when we will discuss the animacy of topics in Turkish.

A number of languages from different origins share the property of having a rich case system. Genetically related to Turkish, Korean and Japanese, and not genetically related Russian, are considered as rich case system languages. Many of the grammatical properties in such languages actually arise from the interaction of grammatical relation, semantic roles, pragmatic roles and the cases that these languages have in their system. Japanese and Korean are different from Turkish and Russian in that these language also have a special marker for the topic. In other words, the subject role, in a sense is distributed between two NPs — some researchers argue that these are *double-subject languages* — and the one which will signal the topic role is assigned a topic morpheme.

### 3.3.4. Aspect of Word Order in Turkish

Approaches to word order in Turkish share the common view that since grammatical roles are marked with case almost unambiguously, this provides the users of the language freeness of ordering of major constituents and variations from the basic order serves for pragmatic purposes, i.e., reorganizing information flow.

There are however, differences in the identification of the basic order. Among the first to propose a basic word order for Turkish is Lewis (1967:240). His basic order is as follows:

subject - expression of time — expression of place — indirect  
object — direct object - modifier of the verb — verb

and his relevant sample sentence:

ressam geçen hafta Bebek'te bize resimlerini ikinci defa olarak gösterdi

Underhill (1972) also proposes a basic word order for Turkish:

subject - direct object - indirect object - verb

These proposed orders are reflecting the unmarked orders. Though the order proposed by Lewis includes the adverbials with no grammatical roles, removal of the items from the order he proposes reduces it to the order proposed by Underhill, except the difference in the relative order of the indirect and direct objects. Ultimately, both proposed orders are indicating an SOV order. The appearance of indirect object before direct object (opposing to the grammatical roles hierarchy we have given earlier) is the natural order that we see in causative, not in double object constructions. Now if we take *göster* as a causative verb, both Underhill's and Lewis's orderings may reconcile.<sup>11</sup>

A number of studies take this order as the basic order: among which we can count Erguvanlı (1984), Erkü (1982, 1983), and Tura (1973), as mainly functionalists<sup>12</sup>, and Özsoy (1991), and Kornfilt (1984), to name some from the formal stand. Among those who object to this order, Sezer (1991), based on the observations of possible permutations in a Turkish sentence, questions the validity/significance of the basic word order. In a similar vein, Erdal (1990) claims that the Turkish word order is fully free and that various orders are not resulting from the application of scrambling (rules) to an underlying basic word order. What structural conditions govern the ordering or movement possibilities is a problem

that requires further research (i.e., scrambling, inversion, toppling, or syntactic movement, etc.).

Traditional approaches to case generally assert conditions where there is always one-to-one correspondence between a particular case and a grammatical role. The observations were mainly deriving from Latin which is also a rich case language. However, we will see below that case marking has other functions than marking grammatical roles.

Studies on Turkish identify seven types of case:

- |               |                   |
|---------------|-------------------|
| a. Nominative | ∅                 |
| b. Accusative | -I                |
| c. Dative     | -e                |
| d. Locative   | - DE              |
| e. Ablative   | - DE <sub>n</sub> |
| f. Genitive   | - nIn             |
| g. Instrument | -lA ( or ile)     |

Nominative and accusative cases are taken to be grammatical cases, i.e., marking grammatical roles, subject and object respectively. The other cases are grouped as oblique cases, mainly marking adjunct NPs and serving as more like semantic cases. This may appear as an oversimplification of the uses and functions of cases in Turkish, however, at this point, we will not argue the functions of cases.

One most striking fact that we observe in the case marking of NPs in Turkish simplex sentences is that, whether it is a grammatical case, marking the grammatical relations or a semantic case marking the adjuncts, a sentence never tolerates two identical case marking with different functions. This holds true for all cases alike <sup>13</sup>. Observe the sentences below:

94. a. Huzur mutluluk getirir.

Peace brings happiness.

- b. Mutluluk huzur getirir.

Happiness brings peace.

- c. Ali kitap okudu.

Ali read a/the book.

- d. Ali kitap, gazete okudu.

Ali read a/the book, a/the newspaper.

95. a. Ahmet Hasan-ı tanıdı.

Ahmet recognized Hasan.

- b. Ben Hasan-ı Ayşe-yi tanıyor sanıyordum.

I thouht Hasan knew Ayşe.

- c. Ben Ayşe-yi Hasan-ı tanı-yor sanı-yor-dum.

I though Ayşe knew Hasan.

d. Hasan Ayşe-yi, Ahmet-i tanıyor.

Hasan knows Ayşe and Ahmet.

96. a. Yeşim Mustafa-ya kazak aldı.

Yeşim bought Mustafa a pullover.

b. Ali Ankara-ya gitti.

Ali went to Ankara.

c. Ben annem-e Yeşim-e kazak ördürdüm.

I made my mother knit a pullover for Yeşim.

d. Ben Yeşim-e annem-e kazak ördürdüm.

I made Yeşim knit a pullover for my mother.

e. Ben Yeşim-e annem-e, kardeş-im-e kazak ördürdüm.

I made Yeşim knit a pullover for my mother and my sister.

97. a. Ali sokak-ta kaldı.

Ali stayed in the street.

b. Ali Ankara-da, sokak-ta kaldı.

Ali stayed in Ankara in the street.

c. Ali sokak-ta, Ankara-da kaldı.

Ali stayed in the street in Ankara.

98. a. Ali ev-den çıktı.

Ali left of the house.

b. Ali ev-den, kapı-dan çıktı.

Ali left the house (through the door).

The above sentences illustrate the 'case' in point. Although we have identical case marking on two different NPs in some of the above sentences, both the conditions on their grammaticality and the interpretation of the grammatical roles of the identical marked NPs are different. In other words, besides the general conditions on their appearances, each deserve a discussion of its own. Here we will argue that this follows from the way Turkish uses its case system.

Given the importance of case system in Turkish, a very general functional explanation will be that a slightest change in the system would yield significant changes in other places in the grammar of the language. Thus, in using this resource, Turkish develops a pattern in which no identical case marking occurs in the NPs of a sentence. If it occurs, it is used to mark a different function. In other words, "correspondence" between grammatical role and the case-marking is one-to-one, i.e., each possible grammatical role in a sentence is marked with its corresponding case-marker.

Sentences in (94) are taken as the sample case to prove that the basic word order in Turkish is SOV. Erguvanlı (1984), Erkü (1983), Sezer (1991), and Özsoy (1991) are among the others who argue that in the absence of relevant case marking, it is the relative order of the NPs to the



verb in the sentence identifies the particular grammatical roles of these NPs <sup>14</sup>. The (c) example, is also significant in that, as opposed to a change in the order of elements in the (a) and (b) examples that yield a new distribution of grammatical roles and giving an acceptable sentence, a change of the places of NPs in (c) will yield an ungrammatical, thus an unacceptable sentence. The contrast between (a-b) and (c) in terms of movement possibilities constitutes one of the major problems in Turkish syntax: it is not clear in the first outlook why the direct object is incorporating in (c) but not in (a-b). We will return to this issue when we are discussing object incorporation in Turkish. In the first approximation we observe that the differences in the semantic contents of the NPs involved, i.e., animate vs. abstract, specific vs. generic, as well the differences in the modal context.

The contrast between (94a) and (94b) is important in terms of its consequences. When two nominative marked NPs are present in the sentence, some sort of “first comes first served” principle applies and identifies the first nominative marked NP as the grammatical subject <sup>15</sup>. Thus, as Erguvanlı(1984) points out, word order is grammaticalized in Turkish.

To sum up the discussions developed so far in this section, we identify that marking of grammatical roles provides freeness of occurrence in different syntactic positions to the nominals in a Turkish sentence. A natural conclusion is that ordering, if not signaling grammatical roles, then signals the pragmatic roles. It has been indicated before that, word order also functions as a definitivizer in Turkish. In the absence of case marking, same as in English, word order also marks the relevant

grammatical roles of the nominals. This also applies in cases where there is identical case marking, i.e., word order disambiguates the role distribution. Now we can formulate the general condition on the uses of identical case-marking in Turkish something like:

*Identical Cases should mark different grammatical roles*

which explains the fate of the second nominative NP in the sentence other than subject NP. In functional terms, this NP will be part of the comment structure, and thus it will be the object since Turkish does not allow double-subject constructions as is argued for many Topic-Prominent languages. The second conclusion is that since this NP is not marked with the objective case it is doomed to occur preverbally, hence it is incorporated with the verb. It may also be argued that the restriction on possible occurrence of double subjects is pragmatically related to the topic interpretation. Again, if subjects are topics in the unmarked order in Turkish sentences, a pragmatic restriction will come into force and will not allow any sentence to occur with two topics. This conclusion may ultimately be tied to the general properties of human processing that a sentence cannot be “about” two things at a time and humans are unlikely to process two “aboutness” given the relative speed of human linguistic interaction. A similar argument that each sentence should only have one topic given the processing load that deviation from this condition would bring about can be found in many studies on the issue (Davison 1984; Reinhart, 1981 among others).

A very peculiar property of Turkish nominative case marking in this respect is that nominative case is a “silent” case in Turkish. In other words, no phonological value is assigned to the nominative as opposed to

all other cases in Turkish. That is to say, one cannot produce or hear the phonetic value of nominative case which would yield to interpret any NP in the Turkish sentence as nominative. It then appears that, Turkish is similar to English in terms of the identification of the particular grammatical roles of the nominative marked NPs if there are two of these in the sentence. Word order comes into play, and as indicated before, identification of grammatical roles requires position-bound interpretation, namely the situation in English arises. Whether the preverbal objects in English are incorporated or not appears as the difference between the two languages; they obligatorily incorporate in Turkish ( as in (94c) ) given the above picture. We will postpone the discussions to the following sections on two related issues to the current discussions: one concern the status of the unmarked object arguments which changes when they are marked for number, i.e., when they occur with indefinite article or adnominal quantifiers; and the assertion that a sentence can have only one topic (or one topic position) and its consequences on the marked orders in Turkish.

The situation is rather different in the sentences where two accusative marked NPs occur. (95a) is the ordinary case where the object NP is marked with the accusative. If we take the sentences (95b) and (95c) as non-configurational structures, i.e., interpret the accusative marked NPs non-hierarchically, we would arrive at the wrong conclusion that Turkish allows two accusative marked objects in sentences.<sup>16</sup> However, here we have a Raising Construction where none of the accusative marked NPs are the arguments of the matrix verb by themselves. As is well known, the so-called raising verbs take sentential arguments, and in our sample the whole clause [ Hasan-ı Ayşe-yi tanıyor]

acts as the argument of the matrix verb. However, since both accusative marked NPs are third person and that third person agreement marker is [ø] in Turkish, verbal agreement here does not help us to identify the relevant grammatical roles of the NPs in this sentence. Here again, word order comes into play and acts as the decisive criterion in identifying the particular grammatical roles of the NPs disguised by identical case marking. Here, change in the order of these elements, as in the case of the nominative marked NPs, we discussed above, yields a differentiation in the grammatical roles of the NPs. In each case both the embedded subject and the embedded object receive the same case marking.

Again, if we accept the argument that Turkish is an SOV language, namely that subject NP appears sentence initially, and that it is regularly marked with nominative, deletion of the accusative marking on the NPs in our sample sentence will reveal the answer we are looking for:

95' b'. Ben Hasan Ayşe-yi tanı-yor san-ıyor-du-m

b''. \* Ben Hasan-ı Ayşe tanı-yor san-ıyor-du-m

It appears that the first NP will be identified as the subject NP and the accusative marked the object NP by deleting the accusative marking. Here, deletion of the accusative on the first NP in terms of its relative order to the embedded verb indicates that the first NP is more likely to act as the subject NP than the second NP, given the ungrammaticality of b''. Although the situation here is more complicated than we have discussed here, it is satisfactory in terms of our present purposes<sup>17</sup>.

Coming to dative marked NPs in (96), we have yet another picture. Basically, as the example sentences suggest, dative marked NPs in

Turkish occur in three different environments. There are a number of verbs which obligatorily select dative arguments, either marking the direction as in (96b) or marking the benefactive argument <sup>18</sup> as in (96a). In (96c) and (96d), dative marks the causee argument and the indirect object. The problem once again is to determine which dative marked NP will be interpreted as causee and which one the indirect object. In other words, the problem is to identify particular NPs grammatical role. It appears that, again, as in the case of nominative and accusative markings, word order will identify the particular NP's grammatical role; the dative marked NP which is "closer" to the verb will be interpreted as the indirect object (cf. footnote 1)

Dative marked NPs pose additional problems to the analysis. In one interpretation, they are closer to the grammatical cases, i.e., nominative and accusative, marking indirect objects. In another interpretation, since they mark the indirect objects, they are argued to be belonging to the class of semantic cases. What interests us here is not the status of dative marked NPs. We will discuss that depending on the semantic status of the NP to which they are attached has important consequences of their topichood in the marked orders. Here we will only note that they are interpreted as sentence topic when they mark the benefactive and recipient arguments and receive "frame" interpretation when they express directionality. In the following section, we will propose a general condition for the use of dative in marking the grammatical roles, i.e., we will propose that dative marks those NPs in Turkish that are low in the degree of "affectedness". Note that what distinguishes benefactive and recipient from allative is that where the former roles are generally associated with animate nominals, the latter does not necessarily have to

mark animate NPs. We will also see that Turkish and Japanese datives behave quite similarly along the lines we have briefly introduced.

The locative and ablative markings in (97) and (98) behave in the same manner. Since they do not mark the grammatical relations and have primarily an adverbial function, they do not have significant effect on the ordering of sentence constituents, and thus on topic interpretation. The only observable effects that they have, as the examples suggest, their ordering signal some sort of hierarchy along the dimension that we have discussed in terms of set-subset relations. The partitive reading of ablatives is important in this respect. Whether they are expressing the meaning “place from” or “part of” has effects on their topichood.

Finally, we would like to note that apart from the situations where identical cases marking different grammatical, hence semantic roles, — in which we have referred to the relative order of the elements in the sentence, as (94d), (95d), (96d), (97c), and (98b) indicate — when only one of them marks the grammatical role, the others — the number of occurrences seems to be unlimited, as long as the discourse conditions permit — are taken only as to serve listing function. Here again, ordering of elements which serve for listing function is also sensitive to a certain criteria, namely, that they seem to follow from “whole” to “part” as in (97c) and (98b).

### 3.4. Topic Creating Structures

For a variety of reasons, mainly arising from the immediate discoursial needs, language users may change the natural flow of information. Any change in the natural flow of information creates a new topic-comment structure, in other words, the information bearing elements in a sentence are organized in a different manner than that of the basic, natural order. Among the functional motivations for the reordering of information structure, there are general triggering factors such as creating a contrastive context, signaling topic shift, shift in focus of interest, etc. We will take the notion of “orientation” or “perspective” setting as the covering terms which includes the motivations for changing the natural flow of information into a single unified concept.

In the unmarked case, the speaker takes the perspective of the prototypical topic. In other words, sentence subject occurs in its canonical topic position and establishes the “starting” point or the perspective from which the rest of the sentence is interpreted. More specifically, the given information sets the stage for the forthcoming new information. In the least technical sense, then, perspective setting refers to the presentation or viewing of situations and events through the perspective of a certain participant. Since topichood correlates with subjecthood and agency, and as the animacy hierarchy places the 1st person at the top, the least marked case would include the situation where first person human speaker views the events and situations from his/her perspective <sup>19</sup>.



Within the frame of functional grammar, the notion of perspective is primarily tied to coding of participant roles with morphological marking, agreement and order, all of which are intertwined with the subject and object functions. Change in the perspective is generally associated with a change in the structure, which involves grammatical operations such as passivization, dative shift etc. (Dik, 1989; Siewierska, 1991). Thus, it follows that perspective change involves change in the grammatical roles which in turn results in the change of relative salience of the constituents in a sentence. In this sense, the subject is taken to define the primary and the object is the secondary perspective in the unmarked order.

In another sense, perspective change involves the change in the semantic roles of the subject and object NPs without altering their relative order or grammatical roles in the sentence. This is something that we have indicated before following the discussions on basic order. Change in the semantic role is also closely related to the notions of animacy and definiteness. In the basic order, natural flow is from agent to patient in a transitive clause where agent is high in animacy and definiteness and patient is lower in animacy and definiteness. Any change in the natural information in this sense, is marked in different ways in the grammars of languages. Comrie (1981) identifies three possible strategies of marking the difference. In the similar manner Hopper and Thompson (1980) quote languages where, in their own terms, different markings of subject and object point out to the degree of transitivity. For some languages of the world any change in the “natural” roles of the subject and object NPs is signaled by the morphological change in the verb — in Fox, for example, inversion is marked by using a different verb — however, this is the least observed strategy. What is commonly



employed crosslinguistically is the marking of the NPs, especially the patient NP to indicate the unexpected situation. Comrie (1981) further notes that in any case, patients above a certain degree of definiteness or animacy is marked accusative, irrespective of the agent. Two of the arguments in this section will of importance for the purposes of this study: First concerns the animacy and definiteness of subject NPs which we will refer in subject incorporation; and second, the definiteness and animacy of patient arguments, which will explain us the obligatory accusative marking of human patient arguments.

Perspective change in a sentence in Turkish, due to the rich case system and freeness of word order, does not necessarily involve a change in the grammatical roles of the subject and object NPs. This, actually, is the observed strategy in rich case system languages. Noonan (1977) reports that, for example, in Russian sentence initial position is reserved for sentence orientation, thus NPs with proper semantic content can be moved to this position to set the new perspective for the predication without changing the grammatical role of the NP. It thus appears that as opposed to poor case languages like English, in the rich case languages like Russian and Turkish, word order will be the formal means of setting differences in perspective or sentence orientation.

To sum up the arguments on perspective setting strategies, we see that languages either change the semantic structuring of the clause by altering the grammatical roles of the subject and object NPs or mark the verb which indicates the change in this direction. Second for some languages, changing the semantic roles of the NPs signal the change in the information flow which mostly signaled by different markings on the

relevant NPs. Finally, reordering the major constituents of a sentence signals the change in the perspective without altering the grammatical or semantic roles of the subject and object NPs.

Turkish employs this last strategy and in the structures where subject NP does not appear in its canonical position, this may be interpreted as a sign of perspective change. In the following section we will concentrate on five types of constructions in which the topic (i.e., the subject) NP does not occur in its canonical position and try to test whether all these occurrence derive new topic-comment structure, or, more specifically, set a perspective than the perspective of the basic order.

Following are the five types of construction where subject NP does not occur sentence initially:

99.        Ø cam-ı kır-dı-m.

I broke the window.

100.      Cam-ı Ali       kır-dı.

Ali broke the window.

101.      Ø | cam-ı kır-an      Ali|

Ali who broke the window

102.      Ali-yi arı soktu

The bee stung Ali.

103.      Cam kır-ıl-dı.

The window was broken

In the first outlook, all the above sentences share a property, namely that it is not the subject NP that precedes all the other material in the sentence. The object NP is the first element that we come across in the linearization of the elements of the sentences. Now, is this a sufficient condition for the object NP to be interpreted as topic? More specifically, are all the structures above, topic creating structures in Turkish?

Structurally, some of the sentences above share certain properties that are not present in others. In (99) we have the very common case of subject drop ( or null subject). Since subject NP is identifiable through the person agreement marker on the verb it may be deleted without creating any ambiguity in the sentence. In (100) we have the simple “inversion” in the sense of Hankamer (1971) that the object NP is moved to the sentence initial position. The conditions on such movement have been discussed in much detail and we will turn to this issue in the following pages. In (101) we have a relative clause in which the target is the subject NP and thus moved to the canonical head position in the clause, thus leaving the object NP in the initial position. In (102) we have the application of the so-called subject incorporation structure where the subject NP is placed immediate left of the verb and the object NP again is appearing on the left of the subject. (103) is a simple passive construction where the underlying object NP is moved to the subject position and the active subject is dropped out of the sentence, as a result of which the active object appears in the sentence initial position.

Common to all structures above we observe the following:

1. In all structures above the patient NP appears sentence-initially;
2. Except the unmarked passive subject in (103) in all structures the patient NP is casemarked with accusative;
3. Except (99) all structures above are marked structures in the sense that a change in the basic order is observed.

We will now move on to the analysis of each structure separately.

### **3.4.1. Null Subject and Topic**

Subjects in Turkish can be identified in three ways; case marking, person agreement, and word order. The nominative case marks the sentential subject and when there are other NPs with the nominative case in the same sentence, it is the word order which identifies the subject through the relevant order of NPs in the sentence. The third option that Turkish uses is the verbal agreement, namely that only subject NPs agree with the verb in terms of number and person. It is generally the case that when the identity of subject is recoverable through the proper marking on the verb, then it is deleted freely in the sentences with a finite verb. Languages which display this property are labeled as Null Subject Languages, or Pro-Drop languages in the literature.

What matters here in terms of the arguments of the present study is the effects of subject deletion on the information structure of the sentence

in Turkish. A very superficial observation will reveal that the “topic” part of the sentence is not represented by an overt referential NP in the sentence and what remains is the “comment” part which also includes marker of the topic, if topics are subjects in the unmarked case. Among those who seek answer(s) to this question are Enç (1986), Zimmer (1986), Nilsson (1991), and Erguvanlı (1986) — although the aim of the last author is not specifically concerned with the discussion of the effects of subject deletion on the information structure, the reference to the role of the linearization in coreferential interpretation of NPs is important in this respect.

Enç (1986) proposes a very strong claim that the sentences with the pronominal subjects signal topic change in the discourse and sentences with the null subject are forming the comment of the previous topic in the discourse. In other words, given the fact that Turkish allows both options, i.e., pronominal and null subjects, the choice between these two options is governed by the use of sentences. Enç asserts that the topic changing function of subject pronouns is clear from the fact that topics are not objects but propositions about the objects.

Since subject drop does not yield any change in the truth conditions of the sentences, in others words, sentences with overtly expressed pronominal subjects and sentences lacking such a subject are expressing exactly the same state of affair without any change in the meaning of the sentence, then the use of pronominal subject is *semantically redundant*. Thus Enç claims that in the following sentences the pronominal subject is semantically redundant and in terms of their truth conditions both sentences are same:

106. Ben çarşı-ya gid-iyor-um.

I am going to the market.

107. Ø çarşı-ya gid-iyor-um.

I am going to the market.

However, although the pronominal subject is semantically redundant, it is not so pragmatically. For the sentences above Enç (1986:196) mentions two possible contexts in which the choice that will be made for which of the two the sentences is to be used is governed pragmatically.

Zeynep has been studying for some time and Ali has been watching television in another room. Ali decides to go shopping. If he wanted to let Zeynep know that he will be gone, he would utter (106) as he leaves the house. But if Zeynep enters Ali's room before Ali has a chance to say anything and notices that Ali is getting ready to leave, she may ask why Ali is putting his coat on. Ali would then reply with (107). (107) would be unacceptable in the first case, just as (106) would be unacceptable in the second case. What makes these contexts different?

The answer provided in the same article is that, in the first case (106) is operative to establish a topic of a discourse since the two participants are assumed to have been not talking for some time and in the second, there is a question asked and established a topic. Since there is already a topic introduced to the discourse, the reply to the question without a pronominal subject can only be interpreted as a comment on the previous topic. Hence, "Only the sentence that signals the introduction of a new topic has a subject pronoun" (Enç, 1986:196).

This assertion is based on the idea that discourse starts with an established topic and unless otherwise signaled for a change of topic with certain devices, the sentences that appear in the discourse are taken to be the “comment” on the pre-established topic. Thus there are devices that are available for the speakers of the languages that they may use at any time in the discourse to signal the change in the topic and thus make their addressee aware of the fact that the sentences he is to utter from the articulation of the signal concern the introduction of a new topic rather than comment on the previous one. As Enç (1986) argues in some languages, other than introductory phrases, topic change can be signaled by using certain forms where the function of the forms is totally independent of the meaning they carry, and pronominal subjects are performing this function in Turkish.

It is clear from the above arguments that the effects of the use of a pronominal subject on the discourse topic is analyzed and little, if any, reference has been made to the sentences where the pronominal subject is deleted. Their function is simply analyzed as the “comment” function in the discourse to the point that the old topic that they are commenting about is terminated. Hence, deletion of pronominal subjects in a sentence does not create a new topic-comment structure.

As it is concluded above, the use of pronominal subjects in Turkish is semantically redundant and they are used to mark the introduction of a new topic to the discourse in addition to their contrastiveness value when they occur in the sentence. Concerning the status and function of overt pronominal subject in Turkish sentences, pointing out to their occurrence in the post-predicate position, Zimmer (1986:196) raises the following



question: what is the point of presenting, as backgrounded material, something which is semantically redundant anyway? if the pronoun is not contrastive in some way, why not omit it altogether?

108.       Bunu hiç anlayamam ben.

I can't understand this at all.

As Zimmer notes subject pronouns in such sentences are not contrastive and similar to other post-verbal sentence constituents these pronouns do not receive the strong stress. The pronominal subjects do not necessarily mark the introduction of a new topic into a discourse and their appearance in whatever position in the sentence brings about different considerations on the pragmatics of sentences. Demircan (1990, 1991), in his analysis on “inverted sentences” in Turkish claims that sentence topics can occur postverbally. More specifically, he argues that postverbal elements and their information status might be considered as new information, depending on the structure. Note that Erguvanlı (1984) never assigns new information status to the postverbal elements, arguing that topics can never occur postverbally. Hence, we have two opposing views in the interpretation of the information status of the postverbal elements in Turkish. Erkü (1983) also argues that *activated* subject and object NPs can occur postverbally to serve as sentence topic.

So far we have seen that subject deletion in finite clauses occurs almost in an unbounded manner in Turkish and pronominal versus zero representation of subjects in sentences do not lead to a difference in terms of their truth conditions. To argue that when pronominal subject occurs in a sentence this marks a change of topic in the discourse appears



to be a very strong claim. After all, if some sort of ranking is to be proposed, occurrence of pronominal subjects to mark the topic shift may rank below when compared other linguistic devices that speakers most readily use when they wish to change the topic.

Another important aspect of pronominal versus zero representation of sentence subjects in Turkish is analyzed by Erguvanlı (1986). In this study, however, emphasis is on the choice of pronominal or zero representation of pronouns in terms of the possibilities of coreferential relations. Erguvanlı, too, argues that since the content of the subject NP is recoverable through the agreement markers on the verb, the use of pronominal subject has an emphatic or contrastive function.

109. a. Bu raporu kim yazdı?

Who wrote this report?

b. i. Ben yazdım.

I wrote (it).

ii. \*Ø yazdım

(I)wrote (it)

From the above sentences, Erguvanlı (1986:211) concludes that "... when the subject of a sentence constitutes new information, this is presented by a full subject NP and not simply by agreement marking ..."

As we have indicated before, in this article Erguvanlı mainly analyzes the coreferential relations between the NPs and tries to provide explanations to the cases where language makes a choice between zero,

pronominal, or either zero or pronominal anaphora. Thus, more importantly, her arguments concern the role of linearization together with c(onstituent)- command relation in determining the proper choice of anaphoric relation between the NPs in the sentence. Erguvanlı concludes that there are different conditions in the operation of coreferential relations at sentence and discourse level, and that, as it is a clear case, restrictions at discourse level are more relaxed.

It is interesting to note that in her extensive study on the function of word order in Turkish, Erguvanlı (1984) makes no reference to the zero representation of subject NPs in Turkish. Even more interesting is the fact that almost all sample sentences that constitute the data of the study include overtly represented pronominal subjects <sup>20</sup>.

Nilsson (1991), argues that sentences with zero subject do not create a new topic-comment structure and proposes the term “covert topic” to indicate the fact that even they are deleted, the null subjects still function as the sentence topic.

Concluding our arguments on the null subject sentences and sentence topichood, we observe that deletion of the subject NP in sentences does not lead to any change in the information structure of the sentence. Since its content is recoverable from the rest of the sentence, subject deletion occurs very freely and even though they are deleted, subject NPs are still the most prominent element in the sentences. Nilsson (1991) introduces the term “covert topic” for the deleted subject NPs. Such understanding appears as the most relevant one given the data in Turkish. The following are the linguistic facts concerning the zero

versus pronominal representation of sentence subjects and topics in Turkish:

1. Both types of sentences express the same truth conditions, i.e., non-representation of subject NP overtly do not create any change in terms of the semantic interpretation of sentences
2. As is argued by Enç (1986), overt use of subject pronouns may be taken as a topic changing device but to argue that this is always the case is to hold a very strong claim. Though they are not pragmatically redundant, their use not necessarily means a change of topic in the discourse. At least there are other linguistic devices that would possibly fulfill this function in a less ambiguous way and there are other places in the sentence for a subject pronoun to occur. When they occur, for example, post-verbally, they are not said to be introducing a new topic, as Zimmer (1986) argues.
3. Agreement does not always provide necessary conditions on the bases of which subject NPs can be deleted. Thus deletion operation is sensitive to the information structure as illustrated by Erguvanlı.
4. Although they are deleted, the subject NPs are still the most prominent elements in the sentence, thus the term “covert topic” can be taken as an operative term in this respect.
5. Ultimately, discourse conditions on deletion not only of the subject NPs but also other material in the sentence is closely associated with the information structure and deletion applies in different manners with respect to sentences versus discourse.

Finally we would like to note the following use of sentences where the subject NP, although it is the second person, may well refer to the speaker himself:

110.       Sen tut, o aptal adama inan.

And you believe in that idiot.

Mostly expressing regret or acting against the expected situation, in such sentences we see that these structures with pronominal subjects by no means can be argued to change the topic in a discourse. Rather, as is the general case, their use is emphatic and here we see the most extreme case of emphasis. This is however, quite restricted in terms of the possible persons in the subject position: *Ben tutayım, O tutsun, Siz tutun*, etc. When used with other persons, reference possibilities are quite reduced.

The last point we would like to refer with respect to subject deletion in Turkish concerns the alternative means of subject identification in Turkish. Note that, at the beginning of this section we have referred to three alternative yet independent means of sentence subject identification in Turkish, namely, *case marking*, *verbal agreement* and, in case of no case marking, *word order*. Note also that verbal agreement is only available to subject NPs, i.e., no other grammatical role bearing element can trigger such an agreement. We believe that this situation demands a functional explanation and as a first approximation, we will argue that agreement and case marking are two distinct syntactic means which also differ in terms of their functions. First, case marking refers to the grammatical relation that an NP bears to the verb, i.e., it concerns the basic predicate-argument structure. Agreement, on the other hand is an

“indexation” relation where a referential link is being established between the “agreeing” constituents. The difference between case marking and agreement is important in this respect since, while referential link is primarily a semantic relation, it is not so for case marking. After all, as we have discussed before, nominative case is the “silent” case in Turkish and it is logically possible to argue for nonexistence of such a case in Turkish. Hence, agreement appears as a more strong bond in terms of subject identification and formally marked for all persons. Since non-marking of person is only limited to third person singular, this does lead to any ambiguity. Note also that while it is possible for other grammatical roles to be marked with postposition, this is not available for subjects. Another important property of Turkish grammar on this issue is that person marking is the “final” marker that attaches to the verbal complex. That is to say, person markers proceed all other suffixes that attach to the verb.

We thus argue that, from the functional perspective, it is the agreement marking rather than case marking which identifies the subject NP in a Turkish sentence. From here we also conclude that since agreement is more a semantic relation and since it is always present in a sentence, topics are thus *present* in a sentence, however, only “covertly.” The occurrence of person markers as the last element of the verbal complex can be reinterpreted from this perspective; since they do not “hide” between the other suffixes in the verbal element, they are given a fixed position which ends the verbal, i.e., comment part of the information structure.

The non-marking of third person can also be related to a general functional principle, i.e., the person hierarchy. Recall that first and second person humans precede the third person in the person hierarchy, which in turn is closely associated with the notion of animacy. Given the fact that animacy and definiteness are the two major notions that define sentence topic, and that the third persons can more suitably be associated with inanimate or abstract entities, i.e., entities which are also low in agency and low in the degree of transitivity, they are less opportunate to agree with the verb, namely the constituent which expresses what the agent performed. Hence, overt use of third person pronouns may be interpreted as a more marked case in Turkish. All these, as we have indicated before, represent our initial observations and thus require further analysis to be proved to be true.

Subject deletion in Turkish, then, does not create new topic-comment structure, neither alters the information flow. The topic “exists” in the sentence and its content is fully recoverable from the marker on the verb which unambiguously identifies it both in terms of its grammatical and semantic role. There seems to be nothing preventing the *Topic Identifiability Condition* operating in null subject structures.

### **3.4.2. Subject Relativization**

Relative clauses are the most well studied structures of Turkish and ever since Underhill (1972) depending on the constituent that is relativized, the terms *subject relativization* and *object relativization* are used in the

literature. Arguments on relative clauses are important from the view point that these structures are targeting the fundamental grammatical roles, namely subject and object.

Subject relativization in Turkish empties the position of the subject and moves it to the head position of the clause itself. The remaining structure is very close to the sentences where subject NP is moved to the postverbal position.

111. Ali camı kırdı.

112. [ Ø<sub>i</sub> camı kır-an ] Ali <sub>i</sub>

We will argue that subject relativization does not create a new topic-comment structure in Turkish. The simple motivation behind this idea is that relative clauses are “about” their heads, i.e., the item which is moved from the clause itself. This is structurally and semantically clear in Turkish that the head of the relative clause in subject relativization, though it can be deleted, cannot scramble away. Any material that may intervene between the head and the clause, which is quite limited, can only function as an adnominal modifier of the head.

Since relativized subject generally occur sentence initially, and also functions as the subject of the matrix clause, i.e., the subject of the relative clause and the matrix are coreferential, Erdal (1994) argues that this constitutes an example of so-called double-subject construction especially in the cases where the subject NP is of [NP<sub>gen</sub> NP<sub>poss</sub>] type.

113. Kırık oyuncaklı çocuk <sub>i</sub>, [Ø<sub>i</sub>] arkadaşının oyuncağını almaya kalktı

The child *with a broken toy* tried to take the toy of his comrade

Since we do not include complex sentences into our arguments, we will not further comment on this structure. However, we will note that since relative clauses are “about” their heads, they are no more different than those structures where the any subject is premodified with some adnominal modifier. Thus, relative clauses, as with any specifier, help to establish the identification of sentence topics, rather than creating a new topic-comment structure.

### 3.4.3. NP Fronting

Fronting the object NP in Turkish is the most common method of creating new topic-comment structure. In fact, it can be argued that since movement of NPs in Turkish does not result in a change in the grammatical and semantic roles, where all the nominals carry the required marking, the language simply does not need any other method of changing the information flow. In other words, moving the NPs with a grammatical role and with proper semantic properties to the left of the subject NP is unrestricted and can apply freely in any structure. The restrictions that apply in NP fronting concern the case marking and semantic features of the NPs. Below we will discuss each of these conditions on the movement of NP to the topic position and hence receive topic interpretation.



In Chapter II we have stated the semantic conditions on the topic NPs in detail. Here we will first introduce the notion of transitivity as it is developed by Hopper and Thompson (1980) and then try to identify the role of transitivity, especially concentrating on object marking and its effects on topicalization. We will illustrate that the conditions that are defined by Erguvanlı (1984) and Erkü (1983) on topicalized structures actually follow from the notions of **affectedness** and **individuation**, the notions which are defined as the components of transitivity. We will also conclude that these notions are ultimately correlated to the semantic roles of the NPs and many linguistic facts draw their properties directly from the interaction of these semantic roles with the inherent semantic properties of the nominals.

### 3.4.3.1. Transitivity and Direct Object Marking

In their crosslinguistic investigation on the notion of transitivity, Hopper and Thompson (1980:251) claim that (i) transitivity is a crucial relationship in language, having a number of universally predictable consequences in grammar, and (ii) the defining properties of transitivity are discourse-determined. The term transitivity, in their understanding, "... is traditionally understood as a global property of an entire clause, such that an activity is carried over or transferred from an agent to a patient. Thus involves at least two participants and an action which is typically effective." Two components, among others, figure out as the most prominent in terms of marking the object NPs: affectedness and

individuation, which in turn decide on the degrees of transitivity the clause expresses, i.e., low vs. high degree of transitivity. The components of transitivity are given as below:

|                           | HIGH                   | LOW                              |
|---------------------------|------------------------|----------------------------------|
| A. Participants           | 2 or more participants | 1 participant                    |
| B. Kinesis                | action                 | non-action                       |
| C. Aspect                 | telic                  | atelic                           |
| D. Punctuality            | punctual               | non-punctual                     |
| E. Volitionality          | volitional             | non-volitional                   |
| F. Affirmation            | affirmative            | negative                         |
| G. Mode                   | realis                 | irrealis                         |
| H. Agency                 | A high in potency      | A low in potency                 |
| I. Affectedness of Object | O totally affected     | O not affected                   |
| J. Individuation of O     | O highly individuated  | O non-individuated <sup>21</sup> |

( Hopper and Thompson, 1980: 252)

Since we are concerned with object marking, the two notions concerning object marking, i.e., affectedness and individuation will be the properties of object NPs we will be looking for. The features of individuation vs. non-individuation on the basis of the NP types are also given in Hopper and Thompson (1980:253):

| <u>Individuated</u>   | <u>Non-individuated</u> |
|-----------------------|-------------------------|
| proper                | common                  |
| human, animate        | inanimate               |
| concrete              | abstract                |
| singular              | plural                  |
| count                 | mass                    |
| referential, definite | non-referential         |

It is clear from this classification that the properties that are listed are overlapping with the properties of the prototypical topic NPs in general. Thus what we will be expecting from those object NPs that may be moved to the topic position to fulfill this function to be marked with these above listed properties.

The problem with the transitive sentences is that they generally contain two nominals as opposed to intransitives. Thus we have two nominals competing for the subject position and which will figure as the subject depends on a number of condition. It is almost agreed by all scholars that if there is agent role to be assigned this will be assigned to the subject NP and, as indicated before, agency is generally associated with animacy as also suggested by the animacy hierarchy. Thus when there is a competition, human agent NPs are more likely to win out.

In their conclusions on the properties of the topic position as well the properties of the object NPs that can be topicalized, both Erguvanli (1984) and Erkü (1983) propose similar arguments. They argue that indefinite inanimate subject NPs should occur in immediately preverbal position and where there are more than one indefinite NP the non-case-marked direct object ( nonreferential) should also occur preverbally. In other words, such NPs cannot be topicalized and in the second case, where the NP is the direct object should incorporate into the verb. Additionally, indefinite [ - animate] subject NPs are not also favored sentence-initially. We will now argue that all of these conclusions can be drawn from the mode of interaction between the semantic and grammatical roles of the NPs in the sentence, their assignment is also conditioned by their semantic contents. In other words, creating a new topic-comment

structure by object fronting can be viewed from a wider perspective, i.e., clauses that are low in transitivity (where the action is not carried over affectedly) will not suffice for producing a topic through the less affected and individuated object NP. On the contrary, clauses in high transitivity will easily create a new topic, since the object to be topicalized is individuated and affected thus definitivized.

Transitivity is closely associated with the morphosyntactic properties of the sentence. In this sense, an action can be transferred to an object NP more affectedly if the object NP is more individuated. Since individuated NPs are generally definite, we would expect that individuated patient NPs will somehow be marked for definiteness given the available means a language has for this marking. Thus, the definite object in (114) will be seen as more “affected” from the action that the human agent performs more than the non-individuated, i.e., indefinite object in (115):

114. Ali sütü içti.

Ali drank the milk.

115. Ali süttten içti.

Ali drank from the milk.

It is argued for many languages that ablative marking versus accusative marking corresponds to the degree of affectedness of the patient NPs. We can then conclude that marking of object NP in Turkish is also sensitive to the partial versus full affectedness of object NPs. Here, where accusative marking indicates totality of affectedness of the object NP,

ablative marking which encodes “quantification” reading signals that the affectedness of the object is limited to some “quantity” of the total. Both Göksel (1993) and Kornfilt (1984) provide detailed analyses on the grammatical role of the ablative marked objects in Turkish through various syntactic tests which generally help to identify the grammatical role status of the NPs. Since we are interested only in the degree of affectedness and its marking in Turkish, we exclude the arguments concerning the grammatical role status of ablative and dative marked NPs.

When the notion of transitivity is considered from the degree of individuation and affectedness of object NP there are other universal tendencies that can be observed among the languages. Hopper and Thompson (1980) claim that many two participant sentences are low in transitivity. We have already mentioned different marking of objects with accusative and partitive along these lines. The second type of structure where direct objects are not transferred an activity effectively is the construction known as object incorporation. Although it is not the case in Turkish, in many languages object incorporation detransitivizes the clause and the incorporated object NP, which is by definition nondefinite and non-referential, is interpreted as a part of verbal complex where verb is the head of the construction. Thus, these object are not objects at all and cannot be said to be neither individuated nor affected.

In a third context where transitivity is interpreted as reduced, we have the differentiation on the marking of the subject NP rather than on the object. In a sentence like *Jerry likes beer*, Hopper and Thompson argue that transitivity is reduced in term of the affectedness of object NP

and note that similar structures are expressed in intransitive clause rather than transitive. In Spanish and Italian alike, for example, the marking of the subject NP changes, when a similar content of the above sentence is expressed:

Spanish:

116. Me gusta la cerreza .

I like beer ( Me = dative)

Italian:

117. Gli piacciono le ciliegie.

They like cherries (Gli = ' to them')

Without going into details of the marking of object that are low in affectedness and individuation through morphosyntactic means, we will conclude here that differentiation in marking is observed universally. This proves the first claim of Hopper and Thompson concerning the status of the notion of transitivity, i.e., that there are universally predictable properties. They conclude their analysis with the claim that concern the second assertion, namely that these facts are ultimately be understood as discourse-determined properties: “ The pervasiness of these devices and their similarity across languages seem to demand an explanation in a higher level, functional framework. In other words, we assume that a linguistic universal originates in a general pragmatic function, and that the universal is not explained until this function has been isolated and related to the universal. Without the connection to a communicative function, the separate components of the Transitivity relationships have

only an arbitrary relationship to each other; we lack a reason why these semantic-grammatical components, rather than others, should be selected " (Hopper and Thompson, 1980:280).

We would like to conclude that the better understanding of the transitive clauses requires a functional explanation given the facts stated by Hopper and Thompson. We will now move onto the properties of object marking in Turkish and correlate our arguments with the conditions asserted by Erguvanlı and Erkü.

We have already indicated that partial versus full affectedness is marked in Turkish through the use of partitive and accusative markings. There leaves four other options for marking of the direct object:

118. Ali cam kırdı.

Ali broke a window.

119. Ali camı kırdı.

Ali broke the window.

120. Ali bir cam kırdı.

Ali broke a window.

121. Ali bir camı kırdı.

Ali broke a window.

In (118) direct object is nondefinite and nonreferential; in (119) direct object is marked with the accusative and thus definite and referential; in (120) direct object is indefinitivized by the indefinite article *bir* and hence

it is nonspecific indefinite; and finally, in (121) direct object is indefinite specific and referential (cf. 2.2.). As it follows from the definition of a simple transitive clause, only (119) above fulfills all the necessary requirements — a human agent, a fully affected patient and a verb that defines an action. Hence, in a broader sense, only the direct object of (119) can be topicalized.

(118) represents a simple case of **object incorporation** in Turkish, a process by which the affectedness and referentiality of the object is reduced universally <sup>22</sup>. Structurally, the direct object NP is supposed to be moving next to the verb and forming a unified structural whole. By this way, the object NP loses its structural independence and cannot move any syntactic position in the sentence without disturbing grammaticality of the sentence. Nor does the structure allow any other material to intervene between the object and the verb other than particles like *de*, *ise*, or question particle *mi* in Turkish. The striking property of object incorporation is that as long as the semantic features of the object NP are compatible with the semantics of the verb, there is no restriction on the application of the process. However we should note that the nominals that are inherently definite cannot be incorporated (e.g. proper nouns)<sup>23</sup>.

Semantically, incorporation of object NPs in Turkish generally result in activity reading (Nilsson, 1986; Knecht, 1986; Kuribayashi, 1990 ). When it occurs, in most cases there is no change in the meaning of the nominal nor in the meaning of the verb and incorporated structure can be interpreted compositionally. For example in (122) below the direct object does not refer to any individual “book” but refers to the activity itself:



122. Hasan kitap okuyor.

Hasan is reading (a) book.

However, as Nilsson (1986) notes, there is a high degree of idiomatization, from more transparent to opaque, where, for example in *parmak usır* interpretive analysis is hardly possible. In this respect, in what component of the grammar noun incorporation applies is a matter of dispute; while some scholars argue that incorporation is a syntactic process whereby an NP is moved “into” the VP, there are others who argue that incorporation occurs in the lexicon prior to syntactic operations. Since we are interested in the topichood conditions on the direct objects in transitive clauses, the details of the process of incorporation will be excluded from the present study.

Although the incorporated object expresses reduced transitivity, i.e., the direct object is not an individual but expressing categorial meaning, grammatically, it still preserves its grammatical role. In other words, incorporation in Turkish does not detransitivize the clause, simply reduces transitivity. Grammatical role changing processes like passivization and causativization apply to incorporated NPs in no different manner than they apply to ordinary accusative marked direct objects.

123. Kitap oku-n-du

(A) book was read

124. Ø Hasan-a kitap oku-t-tu-k

We made Hasan read the book

Passivization moves the object NP to the sentence initial position as it does with the ordinary direct objects and causativization assigns the causee argument the same marker, i.e., dative, as it does to the transitive clauses. Note that if the clause was to interpreted as intransitive, then causee argument should be marked with the accusative. Thus, with respect to these two major grammatical role changing processes, incorporated structures behave as transitive clauses rather than intransitive. Furthermore, object relativization which targets object NPs can also apply freely to the incorporated object:

125. [ Hasan-ın Ø; oku-duğ] - u kitap ;

The book which Hasan was reading

The above arguments are concerned with the structural and semantic properties of the “incorporation” structures. However, the studies on such structures in Turkish provide little explanation to these structures in terms of their function. Keeping to the general functional motivation, which asserts that forms derive their existence from the function(s) they serve, we will argue that there must be some reason behind the properties of incorporated structures. Given the fact that incorporated structures still preserve the objective status of the NP while still allowing an activity reading and that it is virtually possible for all transitive verbs to incorporate their object NPs with great freedom, a functional explanation should seek the *discoursial motivation* behind these linguistic facts. Furthermore, there occurs no change in the structure of the verb — this happens in some languages — and that there appears no restriction to prevent language user to assign *accusative case* to the incorporated NPs. When these observations are considered from a

functional perspective, the motivation behind the incorporation process is that of *discourse manipulability of the participants*. More specifically, depending on the immediate discourse conditions arising, the speaker may identify the participant represented by the object NP as something to which a reference should be made, thus individuated, or has the option of non-individuation of the said participant, i.e., rendering the identity of this participant less salient under the specific condition of the discourse in question. This, then, may be taken as one of those situations where the principles of grammar are adjusted to the communicative needs of the language users. Grammatically speaking, a particular grammatical role is preserved in the expense of referring to this role representing either an individual or a categorial entity. Note also that premodification of incorporated NPs are possible, i.e., any modifier will modify the nominal part of the complex rather than the verbal or the complex as a whole.

126. Ahmet çok balık tuttu.

Ahmet caught a lot of fish

These and other relevant arguments indicate that although they are incorporated such object NPs can be analyzed as *referential* to a certain degree (cf. 2.2.2.). We believe that the source of this referentiality comes from the “reduced” affectedness of incorporated direct objects. Although they are not individuated, they may be argued to be affected. However, this is not a sufficient condition which would render them to function as sentence topic. They are not animate ( [- human ] though may be non-human) and definite; thus even if they can be argued to be referential within limited margins, this is not enough for topic-hood.

Coming back to (120), this sentence requires no further comment than those given above. The only observable difference is that incorporated NPs can occur with indefinitivizer *bir* which renders nondefinite NP a non-specific indefinite NP. With these properties, the incorporated NP still cannot be topic, however, it can be argued that indefinitivized NPs can at least move to the postverbal position *when they are interpreted as specific*. Thus, although the issue is open to debate, indefinitivizer can provide freedom of movement to incorporated NPs.

*Bir camı* in (121), similar to direct objects in (118) and (120) can not be topicalized due to the global restriction that [ - animate] [ - definite] NPs are not allowed to occur sentence-initially, i.e., in the topic position. Below we will return to the indefinite specific NPs and further conditions centering around them.

The sentences (118)-(121) are all including *animate human agent* and *inanimate patient object*. We will now try to test the validity of our arguments on the transitive structures where the animacy and semantic roles of the subject and object NPs are different than those of the previous examples.

127. Cem öğrenci dövdü.

Cem beat student(s).

128. Cem öğrenciyi dövdü.

Cem beat the student.

129. Cem bir öğrenci dövdü.

Cem beat a student.

130. Cem bir öğrenciyi dövdü.

Cem beat a student.

In sentences (127)-(130) we have a human patient as opposed to the previous example set. (127) illustrates that animate objects can also be incorporated in Turkish. What interests us in this set is that the direct object NP in (130) can be fronted yielding a grammatical structure as opposed to (121) above. The only observable difference comes from the animacy of the direct object in (130)<sup>24</sup>. Recall that there is a close relationship between animacy and definiteness. The same notions, when reinterpreted from the notion of transitivity we have been referring in this section, are also related to the notions of affectedness and individuation. Hence, the contrast between the interpretation of (121) and (130) comes from the fact that while in both sentences affectedness holds equally, individuation does not. The difference is then directly reduced to the notion of animacy, i.e., the more animate an NP, it is more individuated and hence more definite. In other words, the impact of indefinitivizer *bir* on both NPs is interpreted differently. To put it differently, indefinite specific NPs carry uniqueness feature though not identifiable by the participants in a discourse, and when animacy features as the differentiating factor, we may say that indefinite specific NPs are relatively more unique than inanimate ones. Thus, although it is not unarguable, based on these contrastive values, we may claim that animate indefinite specific NPs can be topicalized, or at least can be topicalized with relative acceptability:

121      \* Bir camı Ali kırdı.

130      (\*?) Bir öğrenciyi Cem dövdü.

These and other related examples indicate that in discussing topichood of direct object, the considerations should extend beyond the mere notions of definiteness and animacy. They should be relegated to the notion of transitivity, or more specifically to the notions of affectedness and individuation.

In a third set of sentences there appears an *inanimate subject* NP and the direct object is a *human patient*. In the previous chapter, we have referred to the human bias in discussing the relationship between agency and animacy. There we have argued that inanimate subjects are permitted to affect the human experience only in limited fashion. The sentences below will be illustrative:

131.      \* Otobüs öğretmen ezdi.

The bus run over a teacher.

132.      Otobüs köpek ezdi.

The bus run over a dog.

133.      Otobüs topu ezdi.

The bus run over a ball.

Since the inanimate beings are not treated as volitional “agents” and can effect humans in a very restricted manner, as opposed to (127) above, the direct object cannot be left uncase-marked. This actually is due to the

reduced transitivity in a different manner; the capability of the inanimate subject to transfer an action over an animate human patient signals this fact. Where in (127) the human agent is perceived as fully capable of transferring an action over a human patient and thus permit the direct object “caseless”, this is not valid for inanimate subject. Recall that both animacy and agency hierarchies are placing the humans to the left of all the other entities in the hierarchy. (132) and (133) indicate that, at least in these examples, animacy plays a little role where the agent is inanimate, since both sentences are acceptable. Thus where humans are interpreted as more immune to the actions performed by inanimate subjects, animates other than humans and inanimates alike, may function as patients without problems. Note that, where patients are occurring low in the hierarchy, they require more marking than others, as *top* in (133) without accusative is less felicitous.

The universal conclusion that free word order languages and fixed word order languages differ in terms of the number of possible semantic roles for the subject becomes more clear with the examples where non-humans appear as the subject NP. We have already indicated the limited degree of affectedness that inanimate subjects may impose on humans. When instruments occur as subjects for example, in most cases they affect humans only partially:

134. Bıçak [Ø elimi] kesti.

The knife cut my hand.

135. Bilgisayar [Ø gözümü] bozdu.

Computer imparied my eyes.

The Transitivity Hypothesis indicates that animate patients are more individuated and thus more definite than the inanimate NPs. It thus appears that since they are the patients in these sentences whether or not marked with the case, they will always be interpreted as definite. However, in terms of affectedness, under the inanimate subjects they cannot be argued to be affected totally.

The contrast between (121) and (130) which we discussed above appears to hold between (131) and (133) when the direct objects are made indefinite specific. Here again animacy outruns the other factors:

131'.            Bir öğretmeni otobüs ezdi

133'.            \*Bir topu otobüs ezdi

These examples, although they include inanimate subject NPs, the instrument subject can, to a certain extent be interpreted as displaying agency. There are still other cases where inanimate abstract nominals can appear as the subject NP in some transitive sentences. Note that when an inanimate NP occurs in subject position, the sentence is almost always open to metaphorical reading. Abstract NPs and instrument NPs can be contrasted in this respect, due to the fact that agency is not a single unanalyzable notion, but rather should be seen as a "continuum" as Comrie (1981) argues. We will return to this issue below but now we would like to point to the cases where abstract nominals appear as sentence subject. Erguvanlı (1984; 1987) refers to the following contrast:

136.            Ali-yi bir sürpriz evde bekliyor.

A surprise is waiting for Ali at home.



137. \*Bir sürpriz Ali-yi evde bekliyor.

138. Bu sürpriz Ali-yi evde bekliyordu.

This surprise was waiting for Ali at home.

When definitivized, the abstract subject NP appears to be felicitous in the subject position, i.e., in the basic order, however, as (137) illustrates, a change in the syntactic position of such NPs would result in unacceptable sentences. Note also that since word order has a definitivizing function in Turkish, (138) would still be felicitous in the absence of demonstrative pronoun which definitivize the NP.

The above examples also suggest that the notion of transitivity should enter into explanations concerning the organization of information structure. We have seen that the notions of animacy and definiteness that many analyses employ in the study of sentence topic are not explanatory by themselves. As we have tried to illustrate, it is the interaction of these notions with the components of the notion of transitivity that in fact governs the process. The sentences where inanimate entities figure as subject not only low in frequency but also low in transitivity. Here the notion of semantic role, especially the agent role becomes important in terms of actively transferring the action to the patient and these notions in turn are associated with the notions of animacy and definiteness. In other words, animacy and definiteness should be discussed within the transitivity framework. The examples in (136)-(138) are illustrative in that inanimate abstract entities may be assigned certain grammatical and hence semantic roles, however, due to the degree of transitivity associated with these NPs, they can only occur with a limited set of

“stative” verbs like *beklemek*, *bulmak*, *kalmak*, etc. or with “presentative” verbs like *durmak*.

To sum up our arguments in this section, we argue that the notions of affectedness and individuation should enter into explanations as the terms of a high level of functional explanation given the universality of these notions. We have seen that agency is commonly reserved for humans and that where there is a deviation from this privileged status we encounter sentences in low transitivity. Low transitivity clauses, as we have indicated before, are less likely to create new topic-comment structures. There is yet another component of transitivity that we have referred very little throughout our discussions in this section. Volitionality, is a scaleable notion and we have indicated above that since volitionality is associated with agency and although, say, instruments among others, cannot be volitional entities yet are assigned to subject position, there is a continuum related to these notions.

Comrie (1981) interprets agency in terms of “degree of control”, which, in a sense, similar to degree of affectedness in Hopper and Thompson’s terms. Given the fact that a number of other semantic roles other than agent are possible for the subject NPs, the notion of control or degree of affectedness needs to be clarified. In the basic contrast between, for example, agent and experiencer, in *Ali Hasan-ı dövdü*; *Ali Hasan-ı gördü*, where we have animate human subjects and objects, the semantics of the verb, action versus inaction, have consequences not only on the degree of affectedness but also on the notion of volitionality.

There is a great amount of literature centering around the interrelations between agency, volitionality and subjecthood, however, we

will refer to these only in the context of topic interpretation and thus, the account here will be very simple. Coming to back to Comrie's interpretation, agency when taken as a degree of control, includes such notions as instrument and natural force as well.

139. Ali kapıyı açtı. (animate, human agent)

Ali opened the door.

140. Kedi kapıyı açtı. (animate, non-human agent)

The cat opened the door.

141. Anahtar kapıyı açtı. (inanimate, instrument)

The key opened the door.

142. Rüzgar kapıyı açtı. (inanimate, force)

The wind opened the door.

These examples indicate that subject position is available to not only volitional human agents who are supposed to be effectively transferring the action to patients, but also inanimate non-volitional (instrument, force, etc.) entities can occur as sentence subjects. Thus, particular role labels should be taken not as a set of discrete semantic relations, but rather represent different points along the continuum of the notion of control.

We have indicated previously in discussing that marked orders may include not only those sentences that are syntactically altered but also those structures where there is a change in the expected semantic roles of

the participants in the simple transitive clauses on the basis of which the basic order is defined. As the above arguments maintain, components of transitivity, as they are also universally predictable, provide additional conceptual tools in reinterpreting the topichood conditions arising from the simple operation of object fronting. Both deviations from the expected semantic roles and syntactic alternations will be extended over to the analysis of ditransitive sentences in the next section.

### **3.4.3.2. Transitivity and Indirect Object Marking**

In this section we will analyze the ditransitive clauses in Turkish and try to indicate how information structure is encoded in these structures. We will first concentrate on the ordinary three-place predicates and argue that the selection of beneficiary or recipient roles in these structures follow from the semantics of the particular predicate that appear in such structures. Here, the distinction between rich case system and poor case system languages will show itself both in terms of movement possibilities and the restrictions imposed on the semantic role of the “indirect” object NP.

A number of verbs in Turkish appear with three NPs. The so-called three-place predicates assign an additional grammatical role as opposed to transitives and this grammatical role is generally identified as “indirect” object role. For this reason, in literature, these structures are also called “double object constructions.” Despite the differences in the

meanings that these indirect objects express, formally they are both marked with the dative case.

We have claimed before that the sentence topic function is restricted to those NPs which are selected by the predicate and thus they are grammatical role bearing elements. The initial idea is that predication is made over a nominal expression in a sentence and thus it follows that only those nominals which are required for the predicate satisfaction can be sentence topics. If there is a nominal element in a sentence and that it is not selected by the predicate, such NP would only be interpreted as an adjunct NP with an adverbial function. Consequently, if nothing is predicated upon a nominal expression, it cannot be an element that the sentence is "about". We will argue that since "indirect" objects are grammatical role bearing elements, they are likely to be sentence topics. Thus, no additional constraint will be expected to apply to indirect object NPs than that of those apply to all other NPs with one- or two-place predicates in terms of fulfilling topic function in a sentence.

Crosslinguistic studies indicate that in rich case system languages, some cases are both grammatical cases and semantic cases. The dative in Turkish can be analyzed from this perspective. On the one hand, dative marks a grammatical role in Turkish, i.e., the so-called indirect object, and on the other hand it marks those NPs that are not required for predicate satisfaction and hence bear no grammatical role to the verb. A dative marked NP without a grammatical role may occur obligatorily with some verbs and when marked in this fashion these NPs express almost uniformly the same semantic role. Following our discussions on the role of

dative marking in causative constructions in Turkish where it marks the causee argument, we will return to such verbs at the end of this section.

The notion of semantic case indicates that such cases mark NPs with a set of thematic roles. For this reason, Croft (1991) for example, argues that the term “goal” is used by many in the analyses for the dative marked NPs indicates a reductionist approach in that a number of participant roles are subsumed under this term. Although these participant roles are related, they display certain distinct properties that they should not be subsumed into a single unanalyzable role. In case of dative, for example, the traditional allative, recipient and benefactive roles are generally taken as a single thematic role, namely the “goal”. Here, we will also argue that natural language data show that these roles, though they are related, must be distinguished from one another and this distinction will have consequences on their topichood.

There exists no comprehensive list of verb classes that appear with the dative marked NPs in Turkish. As indicated before, dative in Turkish occurs in different environments mainly due to the semantics of the particular predicate. The following are the structures in which we see dative marked NPs:

- a. In ditransitive constructions marking the indirect object
- b. In causative constructions marking the causee argument of the transitive causative
- c. Idiosyncratically with certain intransitive verbs that require a dative marked NP.

We will now turn to each case listed above separately and try to display the role of dative marking in the organization of information structure in sentences.

As we have concluded before, there is no movement restriction on NPs in a Turkish sentence as long as they are marked with the appropriate case. This applies to ditransitives as well:

143. a. Ø kitap-ı Ayşe-ye ver-di-m

I gave the book to Ayşe

b. Ø Ayşe-ye verdim kitap-ı

c. Ø kitap-ı ver-di-m Ayşe-ye

d. Ø kitap-ı Ayşe-ye ver-di-m

...

Although the above sentences are given with zero subject NP, its existence would not change anything other than the emphatic meaning contributed to the sentence and it may occur anywhere in the sentence. What matters here is that since all NPs are case-marked and bear a grammatical relation to the verb, all can be moved to the sentence-initial position and can function as sentence topic. The only restriction that applies in these structures appears to be global restriction on NPs to be moved to the sentence initial position. It follows that since dative marking is obligatory, the only restriction applies to direct object NP, i.e., it should be case-marked to be able to move to any position in the sentence.

Erguvanlı (1984) tests three options with the ditransitive constructions. First she argues that when the indirect object is indefinite, this NP would never move to the sentence initial position, based on the restriction that topic NPs are always definite. Consider the following examples from Erguvanlı (1984)

144. a. Murat parayı bir adama verdi.

Murat gave the money to a man

b. Parayı Murat bir adama verdi.

c.\* Bir adama Murat parayı verdi.

d. √? Parayı bir adama Murat verdi.

e. √? Murat bir adama parayı verdi.

Erguvanlı argues that sentences in which indefinite indirect object precedes the verb are the only acceptable sentences. Thus, she asserts that although in (d) and (e) the indefinite indirect object is not preceding verb is acceptable to a certain degree, it is completely infelicitous sentence-initially. The condition that she offers regarding the indefinite indirect objects is that they may vary their syntactic position, so long as they avoid the S-initial position.

Second, Erguvanlı tests ditransitive sentences where both direct and indirect objects are indefinite. Here only the sentence in which the indefinite direct object immediately precedes the verb derives a grammatical structure:

145. a. Murat bir adama bir kitap verdi.



Murat gave a book to a man.

b. ?Bir adama Murat bir kitap verdi.

Again, following her assertion concerning the ban on indefinite indirect object in sentence initial position, (c) is acceptable only marginally. All other logically possible four sentences of this construction would yield ungrammatical sentences. Third, Erguvanlı argues that when all the NPs in a sentence are definite there are no word order restrictions.

Note that our examples in (143) do not include any indefinite NP. The dative argument is a proper noun and since proper nouns are inherently definite all logically possible derivation should be acceptable sentences. What differs our analysis from that of Erguvanlı's is that, as we have argued before, indefinite [+animate] NPs other than subject NP, can function as sentence topic. Although this occurs in a very restricted fashion, it does not cancel out such a possibility, as we see in (144 c-d) and (145b). Recall that we have referred to the relation of membership to a pragmatic set in our previous analysis. It appears that the same analysis also reconciles with the data presented here.

The requirements for the topic function for indefinite direct objects and indefinite indirect objects should be handled separately due to the nature of the NPs in question. Indirect objects, as opposed to direct objects, are not so much affected from the action expressed by the predicate. As the name implies, they are affected only "indirectly". In terms of the recoverability conditions under discourse conditions, the indirect objects appear to be more freely deleted than the direct objects:

146. a. √? Ø kitap-ı ver-di-m.

(I) gave the book.

b.? Ø adam-a verdim.

(I) gave the man.

The (a) sentence would require less effort on the part of the listener than the (b) sentence. Additionally, in the majority of the cases both roles that dative marks, i.e., beneficiary and the recipient are [+ animate]. This means that they are already fulfilling the other defining criteria for the topichood, namely the animacy. Hopper and Thompson (1980) for example, note that dative morpheme is often re-analyzed as a marker of *definite* and/or *animate* objects. They further argue that indirect objects are true object in the sense that reduced transitivity affects the “accusative” objects but never reaches to the dative objects.

One last point concerning the topichood of the dative marked NPs is that they retain their case marking in passives and in causatives. If passive is to be taken as a perspective setting construction, i.e., expressing the same content of a sentence from a perspective other than the subject NP's, the preservation of dative marking becomes more meaningful. Similarly in causatives we see that dative marked NPs are immune to this process, i.e., they do not change their case marking:

147. a. Ayşe-ye kitap ver-il-di

Ayşe was given a book

b. Ø Ali-ye Ayşe-ye kitap-ı ver-dir-di-m

I made Ali give the book to Ayşe

As the above examples suggest, since dative marked NPs differ from the direct object in terms of the degree of affectedness, they preserve their case marking and their thematic role.

The major problem with the dative marking is that datives constitute the most complicated case in terms of morphology-syntax interface. We have indicated before that dative is both a semantic and grammatical case. When it marks a grammatical role, a regular pattern develops at least to a greater extent. However, when it is taken as semantic case, what kinds of nominals it marks, with what type of verbs it occurs, and what semantic content it contributes to the overall meaning of the sentence is far from being “regular”. Despite these idiosyncrasies, we will argue that dative in Turkish, in the majority of the cases, marks those NPs which are not under the “control” of the agent subject. In other words, dative marked NPs are not controlled by the agent subject as it is the case in many transitive clauses. Thus, in a broader sense, following the concept of transitivity developed by Hopper and Thompson, we will see dative as the marker of reduced “affected” entity, where the agent subject has little control over the dative marked NP as opposed to cases where it has greater control over the accusative marked NPs.

The above examples indicate that dative marked NPs can occur in any syntactic position in a Turkish sentence. This follows from the generalization for Turkish that any casemarked NP would transparently signal its grammatical role and thus is not restricted to any syntactic position. The change of places in Turkish double object construction, as opposed to English, then would not yield to a change in the grammatical

role of the NPs. Furthermore, in English dative NPs can move only within the verb phrase and cannot occur outside the verb phrase.

This is not the only restriction on English dative constructions. Since dative alternation results in a change of grammatical roles and consequently the change of thematic roles, the restriction that hold on these structures are more strict when compared to Turkish double object constructions. Levin (1993) for example, points out that animacy restriction is at work in the following sentences:

148. a. Bill sent a package to Tom/London

b. Bill sent Tom/\*London a package

She argues that (b) sentence is acceptable only if London is used to represent via metonymy the London office of a company on the British government. In a similar manner, pointing out the animacy of beneficiary and recipients animacy and relating these to the animacy hierarchy, Hopper and Thompson also note the role of animacy restriction in English double object constructions:

149. a. Clara wrote a letter to Santa Claus

b. Clara wrote Santa Claus a letter

where we see the preference for an animate object to occur adjacent to the verb which in turn is interpreted in terms of definiteness, i.e., more closer to the verb the NP will be interpreted as more definite and referential. Thus, the so-called dative alternation structures, are sensitive to the 'saliency hierarchy' where there are two NPs in competition it is the more

animate NP which is selected as the direct object, i.e., the more individuated.

The notion of animacy and its effects can be seen in causative constructions in that causee argument which is marked with the dative should be animate. Göksel (1993) reports that the similar constraint also holds true for Japanese.

150. a. Buldozer evi yıktı

The bulldozer demolished the house

b. ? Buldozer-e evi yıktırdım

I made the bulldozer demolish the house

Since causatives constitute a marked case, in terms of the change of *voice*, we will not pursue the topichood of NPs in causative constructions. There are a number of proposals which deal with the issues like basic order in Turkish causative constructions, and the conditions governing the ordering of the other voice suffixes with the causatives.

To sum up the arguments presented so far, we have seen that for languages like English ordering restrictions applies to dative constructions where the change of syntactic position results in the change of grammatical and semantic roles. In other words, it is the word order which distinguishes beneficiary or recipient from the patient. Second, animacy plays a role in the selection for objective status and the notion of saliency is the determining factors here. Animacy is also important in Turkish dative constructions especially in the marking of causee argument. In terms of the ordering of nominals in Turkish ditransitive

clauses we have seen that there is no specific restriction is at work other than in normal transitive clauses.

The ordering of patient and recipient/benefactive roles, however, seems to be sensitive to other syntactic processes in other languages. Siewierska (1988) reports that some languages including Uzbek, German, Dutch, etc., allow both order freely, i.e., patient > recipient and recipient > patient in the unmarked order, when the patient is pronominalized it tends to occur before the recipient. Besides these ordering differences, again crosslinguistic studies report that in some languages both beneficiary and recipient roles can be assigned to subject position.

There is yet another form of marking of the beneficiary and recipient roles. For example, in English, beneficiary is marked with *for* and the recipient is marked with *to*, besides the marking by the word order. When a role is marked by the preposition as such as opposed to marking by word order, it is argued that it expresses more finer distinctions. Furthermore, for a language like English, marking by preposition and marking by word order have grammatical consequences in that prepositions mark the peripheral roles where as word order marks the grammatical roles. This brings us back to the dual nature of dative marking, semantic vs. grammatical case interpretation.<sup>25</sup>

We will now return to the 'idiosyncratic' dative marking. Before we move on to the Turkish data we would like to point out two cases where dative in German behave quite 'idiosyncratically'.

151. Ich habe meinem Freund das Haus abgekauft.

I have bought the house from ( Ger= to) my friend.

152. Mir ruscht die Hose.

My trousers slipped down on me.

It is commonly the case that dative verbs generally express change of possession where the notion of possession is construed quite broadly. It is again generally the case that dative marks the person to whom something is given or sold, however, as (151) indicates, in German it can also mark the person from whom something is bought. Similarly, Blake (1994) indicates that the verb 'rob' also requires dative marking. (152) indicates the extreme case where dative marks the subject NP with the verb "slipped down".

Similar to ablative marking of direct object in (115), dative marking of objects, as we have indicated, are associated with the degree of affectedness. A number of studies (Dede, 1981; Erguvanlı, 1979; Nilsson, 1985; among others) study those verbs which Aissen and Hankamer (1980) label as "oblique" transitives. Following are some of these verbs which generally occur with dative marked NP:

153. a. Ali peynir-i yedi.                      b. Ali peynir-e dokundu.

Ali ate the cheese.                      Ali touched the cheese.

154. a. Ali çocuğ-u vurdu.                      b. Ali çocuğ-a vurdu.

Ali shot the kid.                      Ali hit the kid.

155. a. Biz dağ-ı tırmandık.                      b. Biz dağ-a tırmandık.

We climbed the mountain.                      We climbed to the mountain.

156.      a. Biz merdiven-i çıktık.                      b. Biz merdiven-e çıktık.  
                  We climbed the stairs.                      We climbed to the stairs.
157.      a. \*Ben Aliy-i kızdım.                      b. Ben Aliy-e kızdım.  
                  I got angry with Ali.                      I got angry with Ali.
158.      a. \*Ben Aliy-i güldüm.                      b. Ben Aliy-e güldüm.  
                  I laughed at Ali                      I laughed at Ali.

The works on these verbs conclude that the difference is the one in which there difference in the “degree” of affectedness. Recall that the degree of affectedness is closely associated with individuation and animacy, and all these were contributing to the definiteness and hence referentiality of the nominal expression. Besides the set of verbs which have transitive and intransitive uses, the so-called psyche-verbs, or psychological states verbs also occur with dative marked “objects”. However, as opposed to ‘incorporating’ structures where the incorporated object NP ( despite the lack of objective case marking, fill the “direct object” slot ) behave no different than ordinary non-incorporated objects with respect to grammatical role changing processes, the dative marked NPs are immune to these processes. Note that this applies to all NPs that are marked with dative irrespective of their grammatical and semantic roles.

159.      a. Dağa tırman-ıl-dı.  
                  The mountain was climbed.
- b. Ø bizi dağa tırman-dır-dı-lar.



They made us climb to the mountain.

Psychological state verbs differ under causativization, which also do not permit accusative marking due to the semantics of these verbs. The other set of psychological verbs also mark the object with an other oblique, namely, with ablative -DEn.

The point we would like to indicate is that, as long as they are marked, marking contributes to the referentiality of the nominals. Dative marking in ditransitives is an obligatory marking, i.e., whatever the particular semantic role that they bear to the verb, all indirect objects are marked with case, hence they are definite NPs. Animacy applies only to those semantic roles of beneficiary and recipient in ditransitives and no matter how they are further indefinitivized, these dative marked NPs can move to any syntactic position in the sentence, including the sentence initial position. Since they are obligatorily marked and since they are animate, they fulfill the two basic conditions that are expected from the NPs in the sentence initial position. Thus, even when they are indefinitivized ( *bir NP-dat*) they can occur sentence initially to function as sentence topic without leading to unacceptability and ungrammaticality.

Concluding our remarks on *ditransitive* sentences, we see that rich case system provides Turkish greater freedom in terms of ordering the major constituents, including the dative marked indirect object. *Scrambling* of NPs within the VP can be interpreted as marking the relative salience of the constituents. Such movements in Turkish as opposed to English do not lead to a change in the **grammatical** and **semantic** roles. Neither the ordering is sanctioned by the animacy of the

participant NP, nor pronominalization have impact on the choice of an order to another. Since dative is taken as a semantic case at the same time, it is not possible to provide a unified account for the semantics of the dative marked NP, however, it is almost always interpreted as a signal of “reduced transitivity”, which we identify for Turkish as a global function of dative.

Since grammatical roles are marked with cases, animacy has no profound effect on the ordering of NPs in a Turkish *ditransitive* clause as it does in English. However, for some languages including Turkish and Japanese, causee argument which is also marked with the dative should be animate. Marking an inanimate NP in this position is acceptable only under metaphorical reading. Japanese further makes a finer distinction which Turkish ignores:

160.      a. Taroo ga Ziroo o ikaseta ( o = accusative)  
             b. Taroo ga Ziroo ni ikaseta (ni = dative)

Although both sentences mean that “*Taroo made Ziroo go*”, dative marking signals the minimal control of the agent on the patient. Dative marking is also illustrative in terms of the relationship between *agency* and *animacy*, for example in Lak, subjects of verbs of perception are also marked with the dative, again indication of reduced transitivity. The relationship between agency, animacy and affectedness will also be explanatory in the following section.

### 3.4.4. Subject Incorporation

The previous sections have already established the differences that indefiniteness of subject NPs bring into sentence interpretation. Nondefinite [-animate] subject NPs are generally placed immediate left of the verb, and in cases where the structures allow, such subject can be moved to the sentence initial position where they receive definite interpretation. Similar to object incorporation structures, in the so-called subject incorporation structures we observe that an NP and a V form a semantic complex which generally expresses an activity. There are structural differences, however, that subject incorporation structure allows linguistic material to intervene. We will try to indicate that there is a general functional motivation behind the subject incorporation structures, primarily related to the “competition” for the topic position between the nominals that occur in transitive clauses <sup>26</sup>.

161. a. Turan-ı arı soktu.

A bee stung Turan.

- b. Arı Turan-ı soktu.

162. a. Lavabo-yu saç tıkadı.

Hair clogged the sink.

- b. Saç lavaboyu tıkadı.

163. a. Köyü sel bastı.

Water flooded the village.

b. Sel köyü bastı.

Superficially, (a) sentences above display no difference from the structures where simple object-fronting applies. In both cases, the object (i.e., patient NP) appears left to the subject NP, in other words, occurs in sentence topic position. The difference is that the (a) sentences appear more “natural” than (b) sentences, although they are “marked” structures, i.e., displaying deviation from the unmarked order.

In (161) above, there is a human patient expressed by a proper noun. These features place the object NP in (161) to the highest slot in any hierarchy we have reviewed so far. In other words, when compared to the animate and nondefinite, non-referential subject NP *arı*, the human object is more “topical” and more likely to occur sentence initially. From the “perspective” of the speaker, human patient figure more topical than the subject in that it is not the bee’s action that matters, on the contrary, what matters is what happens to the human patient. Since the subject is nondefinite and nonreferential, it is more likely to occur preverbally as it happens to all NPs with such semantic features. Note that the same also applies to nondefinite and nonreferential subjects of intransitives. What differs these structures from object incorporation, as we have indicated above, is that they do not constitute a structural complex, i.e., permit linguistic material to intervene.

The naturalness of this ordering becomes more apparent when we compare these structures with that of object fronting structures where the subject is more definite.

164. Camı Ali kirdi.

When object is fronted, where the subject is definite human agent, it generally receives the contrastive stress leading to a contrastive reading. It is, on the other hand, less likely for the nondefinite nonreferential subject NP to express *contrastiveness*; hence, the general tendency for humans to select more animate and more definite NPs as sentence topics, i.e., something that is worth talking “about”. Here we find an evidence for the notion “natural topicality”.

For (162) and (163) above, similar arguments can be proposed. Although these sentences do not include human patient NPs competing with the nondefinite nonreferential nominals, the subject NPs cannot be said to be volitional agents. In both cases, there is a nondefinite [-animate] subjects, which places them low in the accessibility hierarchies, and they are said to be low in transitivity. Again, similar to (161), the incorporated subjects in (162) and (163) do not express contrastiveness in any sense, and are interpreted as natural <sup>27</sup>.

There then appear to be three possible means of organizing information structure from the “perspective” of object NP. The most commonly occurring is the one where the object NP is fronted. Subject incorporation figures out as the second and the passive, to which we will return in the next section, the third. Although, all these structures can be taken as a perspective setting structures, the subject incorporation structures appear as the most straightforward cases where the notion of natural topicality comes into force. The fronting of the object NP where there is a definite subject NP would lead to a contrastive reading as opposed to subject incorporation and passivization appears as the most marked

structure when voice is changed which is followed by the morphological changing on the verb. Furthermore, passive “absorbs” case marker of the active object and makes it a grammatical subject, in other words, a change in the grammatical roles takes place. Additionally, subject incorporation and passive in Turkish also differ from each other in terms of allowing the nondefinite subject NP to occur in the sentence in subject incorporation but not in passives. This, in turn, may also be taken as an indication of non-contrastiveness of incorporating subjects. Thus, closely associated with the case marking of grammatical roles and word order freeness, subject incorporation structures can be analyzed as structures where the functional roles appear more prominently than the grammatical roles.

The incorporation of subject, as in the case of object incorporation, in terms of their semantics, express activity reading, however, the identity of grammatical roles are preserved and open to the application of grammatical processes. Note that subject incorporation structures cannot passivize:

165.      a. \*Turan arı sok-ul-du.  
              b. \* Lavabo saç tıkan-ıl-dı.  
              c. \* Köy sel bas-ıl-dı.

Leaving the arguments concerning the semantics of the verbs <sup>28</sup> in these structures, we will argue that the ban on passivization here is also closely related to the notion of perspective setting. Since perspective of the object is already set by subject incorporation, another object perspective setting

operation, i.e., passivization, on the same structure will count as unnecessary.

### 3.4.5. Passive

The term passive can best be viewed as a cover term including structures that sometimes display very discrete properties. However common to all passives or passive-like structures, there is demotion of the role of the subject in the sentence. In other words, from our perspective, the topic of the basic order loses its salience and, commonly, it is the object of the basic order which figures as the most salient nominal in the sentence. Hence, passive is another way of setting the “object” perspective.

Studies on passives in Turkish mostly concentrate on the certain specific properties of Turkish passives, i.e., on passivization of intransitives and on so-called “double passives”. Turkish is said to be a member of a class of languages which display different passivization patterns from other languages in permitting passives of intransitives. It is not our aim here to provide a detailed account of passivization and the conditions governing passivization process in Turkish. We will simply take passivization as a process whereby information flow is changed and thus a new topic-comment structure is produced.

As we have indicated above, there are basically three forms of setting the “object” perspective in Turkish. The first is simple object fronting; second, is the subject incorporating structures, and finally the

passive. In all these structures, there are conditions in operation and each has its own peculiar properties in encoding the information structure. Despite differences among these structures, however, animacy and definiteness restrictions apply equally to all of these structures <sup>29</sup>.

166. Cam kır-ıl-dı.

The window is broken.

167. Okulda çalış-ıl-ır.

It is worked at school.

168. Sigara iç-il-mez.

No smoking.

In (166) the object of transitive clause appears as the grammatical subject of the passive sentence and the transitive subject is dropped out of the sentence. (167) is the passive of an intransitive and (168) is the sample of so-called impersonal passive in Turkish.

Passivization of a transitive clause, from the functional viewpoint, performs the same operation as in object fronting, i.e., makes the object as the starting point. The major difference in this sense is that passivization changes the voice and this is also accompanied by a change in the verb morphology. Subject of the transitive clause is no longer permitted in the sentence and, as opposed to English by phrases, Turkish *tarafından* is almost always redundant, even its occurrence is not preferred. There are many arguments behind this, some even relate this to the morphology of the *taraf-ın-dan* phrase. We would like to indicate



that non-preference of agentive phrase in passive may be related to the fact that subjects are generally identified through the verbal agreement and since passive subjects also agree with the verb, this makes the “second subject” unnecessary in the sentence, if not securing sentence from ungrammaticality.

Passive of an intransitive clause is generally constrained by the *agency* of the underlying active subject. Since intransitive clauses minimally occur with a single NP and this single NP is the subject NP, passive form then is expected to occur with a verb clause marked with the passive morpheme. Superficially, if we think of these sentences without passive voice, they are similar to that of intransitives with null subject. When we think of the general condition that passive applies only to intransitive clauses with agent subjects and since agency is generally construed by animacy and humanness, then, in a very simplistic manner, we can say that null-subject intransitives and passives of intransitives only differ in terms of the “person” identification. In other words, where it is possible to identify the person in null-subject intransitives, it is not possible in their passive counterparts. Thus, as also observed by Biktimir (1986) passives of intransitives which are *impersonal* in this sense, are required “in order to allow speakers to distinguish between clauses with deleted subjects ( anaphoric deletion ) and clauses with non-specific subjects”. In root clauses where there is always obligatory verbal agreement, subject can freely be deleted due to identification through agreement. The deletion of subject through passivization, on the other hand, renders the sentences subjectless without any means of identification of the person. This brings us back to the problem of topic interpretation in such sentences. Passive, as we discussed above, in

transitive sentences is another device whereby the perspective is changed and the object of the active clause appears as the starting point. Since there is no object in the underlying active clause of the intransitives and it is the obliques which occur sentence initially, i.e., those NPs that are not selected by the verb and nothing predicated over them, what counts as sentence topic in these structures?

It appears that the passives of intransitives are “about” the oblique NP that occurs sentence initially. Then, one should think of the restriction of agency on the underlying subject. We will argue that, similar to the null-subject sentences, the underlying animate agents are said to be fulfilling the topic function, however, they are fulfilling this function *covertly*. Note also that there are formal evidences in this direction ; obliques preserve their case marking under passivization which in turn implies that they are not grammatical role bearing elements.

Concluding our remarks on passivization, we will analyze passivization as a process by which new topic-comment structure is produced. This constitutes one major function of the passive as identified in Siewierska (1984). The other two, namely, impersonalization and detransitivization are self evident from the passive examples and need no further comment. Topicalization by passivization is different from the object fronting in that where there is an argument deletion which is followed by a change in verb morphology in the former, none of these are observed in the latter. Passivization of intransitives is sensitive to the notions of agency and animateness and thus from here it can be argued that impersonal passives functionally serve to provide speakers to

distinguish between sentences with deleted subject and sentences with non-specific subjects.

There is yet another structure where the object NP figures in the subject position and where it is not clear whether there is a deleted subject. Nor do these structures appear with the passive marking:

169. Bu kalem iyi yazıyor.

This pen writes well.

170. Bu süt çocuğunuzu iyi besler.

This milk feeds your baby well.

There is a great number of structural considerations that should be discussed with reference to these structures, i.e., obligatory definiteness of the subject NP, temporal restrictions, implicit arguments, etc.; however, we will only concentrate on the topichood of the subject NPs.

Note that when these subject NPs occur as object NPs with these predicates in transitive and intransitive clauses they should be casemarked in order to be topicalized. For example, *kalem* in (169) can only be moved to the topic position only if it is marked with the instrument role. However, since obliques cannot be sentence topics even when they occur sentence initially, it then appears that only under such structures as represented above *kalem* can be topicalized. Note also that when passivized in an intransitive clause like *Ali kalemle iyi yazıyor*, passivization would preserve the case marking on the object NP. Thus, the so-called *middle construction* then stands as the only choice for the proper topicalization of such NPs. Furthermore, since they are inanimate

NPs, the general condition on inanimate topics applies and an adnominal modifier definitivize the subject NP. Similar arguments hold true for (170).

The existence of middle constructions or anti-causatives as Siewierska calls them, is an issue open to debate and as we have indicated above there are other arguments surrounding these structures. What interests us here is that we have structures where the patient object is surfacing as the subject of a sentence without objective case marking as well as without overt passive marking on the verb. Although these structures are not occurring frequently and restricted to a limited number of predicates, they display sentence topic properties.

### 3. 4. 6. Other "Marked" Constructions

The structures that we have discussed above as topic creating structures are not available for languages which refer to word order as a marker of grammatical relations. In other words, say, object fronting, would derive a completely new sentence in English, if not ungrammatical, with a completely different propositional content.

171.        Harry kissed Mary

172.        Marry kissed Harry

Although the above sentences including exactly the same nominals and the same verb, they cannot be used interchangeably. Thus, signaling

grammatical and hence semantic roles by means of word order imposes a strict restriction on English sentence to refer to NP scrambling in creating new topic-comment structures. On the other hand, most of the structures that are argued to be reorganizing information structure in an English sentence, sounds “unnatural” in Turkish. In this section we will review the so-called marked topicalization structures in English and indicate how they are represented in Turkish.

In the beginning of this chapter we have referred to Davison’s scale of marked structures. The idea behind the scale is to approach to the notion of markedness in a more explicit manner and try to point out the degree of markedness which occurs differently in different structures. The so-called left- and right-dislocation structures are labeled as the most marked structures in Davison’s scale.

173. Parents don't understand. But *all grownups* *,* *they* *,* do it to kids, whether they're your own or not. (Keenan and Schieffelin, 1976)

173. She saw *him* *,* *the man* *,*

(173) above is taken as the left-dislocation structure where an NP which is not an argument of a verb is adjoined to the left of the main clause and establishes a coreferential relation with the pronominal element or full lexical NP in the main clause, which is either the subject or the object of the clause. If the adjunction is made to the right of the clause as in (174) then the so-called right-dislocation structure derives. These structures occur only in limited contexts, mainly in the spoken discourse.

It is arguable whether there are left- or right-dislocation structures in Turkish, however, in the spoken data of Schroeder (1994), we have found only two sentences which look similar to such structures of English:

175. *Cenazeler* | ... yani başta ustalar yapar *onu* |

176. *Küçük çocukları* | ... anneleri besliyor *onları* |

(175) occurs in context where one participant inquires about the ways and means of organizing funerals in a particular location where the answerer is supposed to be a member of the local community. (176) is also an answer to a question, “Sizin burada çocukları neyle besliyorlar?” As the written documentation of the spoken data indicates, impromptu speech naturally occurs with hesitations and repairings. The question here is that whether such structures can be taken as topic creating structures in Turkish. Note that these structures are similar to the “double subject” sentences of the topic marking languages, and as we have indicated before Erdal (1994) argues for the existence of double-subject structures in Turkish, at least in the Old Turkic period (cf. 3.4.2).

Cleft constructions are also identified for English as topic creating structures whereby a nominal element in a sentence is fronted and placed in a context where it occurs with a dummy subject and copular verb and the moved nominal heads a relative clause.

177. It was *JR* that Kristin shot.

Here, the underlying object NP is fronted and thus topicalized <sup>30</sup>. As opposed to “dislocation” structures, Turkish equivalents of cleft structures produce more natural sequences. Sezer (1982), Tura and Dede

(1982) and Erguvanlı (1984) among others, review the cleft structures in Turkish. Here are some relevant examples:

178. Ağacı kesen Aliydi.

It was Ali who cut the tree.

179. Hasanı döven Aliymiş.

It was Ali who beat Hasan

These structures are similar to subject relativization structures, same as in English. The only difference between clefts and relativization is that the relativized subject act as a predicative element in the latter but not in the former.

To sum up our arguments, the “dislocation” structures since they occur least frequently and appear as ‘repairing’ structures in Turkish spoken data, we will not count them as topic creating structures in Turkish. Given the unambiguous means of representing information structure quite freely, Turkish does not need such structures as English does. Clefts, on the other hand, can be taken as topic creating structures whereby the head of the relative clause functions as predicative element and thus the sentence initial object NP can serve the topic function. In the ordinary subject relativization structures, as we discussed above, object NP cannot be said to be topicalized. Thus, clefts in Turkish has a functional motivation in communication.

Finally we will note that both clefts and left- and right-dislocation structures can be taken as “marginal” structures of topicalization, given

the relative freeness of the application of the topic creating structures we have discussed throughout this chapter.

## Conclusion

In this chapter, the emphasis was on the structuring of information flow at sentential level. In the previous chapter we have reviewed the semantic properties of nominals and the processes that have impact on their semantic interpretation. There we have concluded that NPs should fulfill certain semantic requirements in order to occur as sentence topics. The present chapter expanded the analysis to the sentence level and reanalyzed the semantics of NPs with reference to grammatical and semantic roles as well as their movement possibilities in the sentences.

We have reviewed the notions “basic order” and “markedness” which are generally forming the foundations of functional approach to syntactic analysis. The following arguments were based on the notion of basic order as we have stated at the beginning of the chapter. Here we have argued that, notion of markedness should not be limited to sentences which display different orders than the basic order, but also be expanded to cover sentences where the semantic roles of the subject and object NPs deviate from the ones that are defined in the basic order. Interpreting markedness as such has been useful in the analysis of the sentences where we have adopted the *Transitivity Hypothesis*.



Our analysis started with the sentences where there is only one nominal element. Since subjects are reanalyzed as topics in the unmarked case, in "subject-only sentences" there is little ambiguity in the identification of the topic NP. In this sense, we have treated nonverbal sentences and intransitive sentences alike. We have argued that, in the existentials, any nominal that occur in such sentences other than the subject NP, will receive "frame setting" element interpretation. The important issue in terms of topic interpretation in existentials is that, primarily due to their "presentative" function, the subject NP of these sentences has been identified as New Topic. For the substantives, we have seen that these sentences, depending on the semantics of their predicative nominal, express different semantic relations between the predicate and the subject NP. The conclusion is that the subjects of these sentences could not be indefinitivized by *bir*. Their subject should always be definite and thus can receive topic interpretation.

We have analyzed intransitives with reference to the semantics of the predicate. Here we have emphasized the role of the oblique context created by the predicate. Similar to the nonverbal sentences, in the intransitives there is no other nominal competing for the topic position. Hence, with regard to the definiteness and animacy of the subject NP, the ordering of the obliques appeared to be playing an important role. Here we referred to the notion of *semantic bondedness* in deriving intransitive sentences. Judgments of grammaticality and topichood in intransitives are viewed in terms of the relative ordering of obliques and their interaction with the semantics of the intransitive verbs.

Many of the arguments concerning the alternative structuring patterns of information flow were based on the arguments on the relative order of elements in a transitive clause. Here we have developed a broader perspective where we have identified different structures as performing the same function, namely “perspective setting”, or “orientation”. Adopting the notion of transitivity as it is developed by Hopper and Thompson (1980), we have argued that the notions of definiteness and animacy as defining notions of topichood, can be derived from the two components of transitivity. We have tried to display the interaction between *individuation* and *affectedness*, as the components of the Transitivity Hypothesis, with the notions of animacy and definiteness. Using these notions in our analysis, we have argued that NP fronting, subject incorporation and passivization are performing the same function, i.e., they all create new topic-comment structure. Thus, adopting a functional approach, the notion of perspective setting provides us a theoretical ground in developing a unified account for the above mentioned structures. In other words, we have seen how different formal devices are used to fulfill a general communicative need of the humans, namely to distinguish the old information from the new.

Finally, we have argued that, other marked constructions including *left dislocation* and *clefting*, have little importance in the organization of information in Turkish sentences given the richness of the availability of the less “marked” options.

### Notes to Chapter III

- 1 This sentence without the subject NP may well be “communicative” in a discourse setting. However, this property is not limited to the existentials only ; (6) can only be an answer to a question, with the restriction that questioning should be on existence of an entity.
- 2 The domain difference becomes clear with the *presentative verb* *durmak*:
  - (i). \* Üniversitede boykot duruyor.
  - (ii). Masada bardak duruyor.
- 3 Note that locatives can also be used to express *possession*. However, they can never be used to express genuine possession. When used as the expression of possession, they express the relation of having the control of.  
  
Ali’de bilgisayar var / Ali’nin bilgisayarı var / Ali bilgisayarlı
- 4 When the predicate is a possessive pronoun, a difference in semantic relation occurs. It is similar to equation reading: *Para benim*. Sezer (1982, 1987) provides for relevant discussions and examples.
- 5 Kerslake (1988), Tura (1986), and Vandewalle (1988) give comprehensive classifications of the semantic relations in copulars in Turkish.
- 6 Although it is possible to read predicate as a “compound verb”, we will not interpret it as such.
- 7 Patients can also be subject NP with *gitmek*, however, this is not possible with *dalmak*.
  - (i). Size bir paket gidiyor.
  - (ii). Paket size gidiyor.
- 8 The semantics of *motion verbs* is one of the most complicated ones. In literature there are a great number of studies trying to decompose the notion of motion into its components, like, *ground*, *path*, etc. (Talmy, 1985).

- <sup>9</sup> The differences between formal and functional approaches to language universals are discussed in Foley and van Valin (1984) and Croft (1990) in detail. The arguments not only concern the conclusions but also cover the major methodological differences.
- <sup>10</sup> Göksel (1993) presents different views in this respect. She argues that transitivity in Turkish cannot be taken as a surface phenomenon as it is in English and that the optionality of object NPs in transitive clauses in both languages should be treated differently.
- <sup>11</sup> Gibson and Özkaragöz (1981: 93) propose the following formula as indicating the unmarked order in causative constructions:

$$(1) \quad 3 \quad 2 \quad (\text{non-term}) \quad V$$

Here non-term stands for the oblique noninals which are generally adjuncts, or frame setting elements, as we use the term in this study. Since causative constructions systematically display ambiguities, the authors argue that in case of such ambiguities, the above formula should be applied for disambiguation. Knecht (1986) further comments on this formula.

- <sup>12</sup> Dik (1989) lists a number of languages in which functional syntactic positions in accordance with LIPOC are studied. He quotes the study of Schaaik (1983) on Turkish word order *template*. Turkish word order, according to this functional analysis, appears as follows:

$$P1 \quad A^1 \quad X \quad Y \quad P\emptyset \quad V$$

- ° P1 can be used for Topic constituents
- ° P $\emptyset$  is used for Focus constituent
- ° A<sup>1</sup> is used for the first argument, X for satellite, and Y for A<sup>2</sup> and A<sup>3</sup> terms, when these constituents have no special pragmatic function.

- <sup>13</sup> We discard the Genitive and Instrumental from our discussions. Genitive is the case that relates two NPs to each other and also marks the embedded subject of the nominalized clauses. Instrumental, on the other hand, appears more like a clitic in Turkish.

- 14 In the literature different scholars propose different sample sentences and we do want to add a new one. In Erguvanlı (1984) it is *Huzur mutluluk getirir/ Mutluluk huzur getirir*; in Erkö (1983) *Ciddiyet disiplin sağlar/ Disiplin ciddiyet sağlar*; in Göksel (1993) *Kedi kuş yemez/ Kuş kedi yemez*; in Özsoy (1991) *Hareket bereket demektir/ Bereket hareket demektir*; in Sezer (1991) *Para mutluluk getirmez / Mutluluk para getirmez*. Although some of these sample sentences require some comment in relation to the content they are taken to be exemplifying, we leave this issue open here.
- 15 Recall that we have referred to natural ordering principles in the previous chapter. Hence, the condition that applies here is a universal one and not limited to Turkish sentences only.
- 16 Although we have indicated before that complex sentences will not be dealt with in this study, the current example and the causative constructions (96) are exceptionally occurring as data in this study. These will be used simply as the present discussions suggested them. No further discussions will follow the raising constructions and the causative in Turkish.
- 17 The relevant condition here actually applies to the proper nouns. These nouns be taken be definite inherently and high in animacy. When these two conditions are fulfilled, the universal condition applies and such NPs are casemarked obligatorily. See also, Chapter II for the semantic conditions on NPs.
- 18 Different scholars assign different functions to dative in Turkish. For practical purposes, we take only these three cases.
- 19 This is captured in Kuno and Kaburaki's (1977) notion of *Empathy*.
- 20 Kerslake (1992) makes the same observation.
- 21 Among those who study of Turkish syntax, only Aksu-Koç (1986) reviews the validity of these parameters in analyzing transitivity in Turkish.

- 22 Some languages represent the extreme case where an object incorporates with the verb and incorporation makes the clause intransitivity. This is accompanied by a morphological change in the verb.
- 23 There are exceptions, however very limited in number, like *Kuran oku* (Nilsson, 1986).
- 24 Dede (1986) argues that even in their direct object position, marking the direct object NPs indefinite specific is sensitive to the animacy of the NP:
- (i). Ø bir öğrenciyi arıyorum
  - (ii). \*Ø bir kitabı arıyorum
- 25 Palmer (1991) argues that French has personal pronouns that provide evidence for the full grammatical status of beneficiary.
- 26 Knecht (1986) and Hankamar and Knecht (1976) argue that subject incorporation also applies in intransitive clauses. However, we will limit ourselves here to the transitive clauses. In intransitives, a number of different conditions can be said to be intervening, including the non-agency of the subject NP. Both Knecht (1986) and Knecht and Hankamar (1976) mainly refer to these structures in relation to the relativization structures. They argue that subject relativization applies obligatorily in sentences where the subject is nondefinite and claim that such sentences may be called "subjectless sentences".
- 27 The subject incorporation structures are more common with the so-called weather verbs; *güneş çarp-*; *kar yağ-*; etc. and the actions generally associated to animates low in hierarchy; *böcek sar-*; *kurt gir-*; etc.
- 28 Verbs which do not assign agent role to their subjects are more likely to occur with subject incorporating structures. Since agency is generally associated with humans and animacy, NPs which do not fulfill these conditions can incorporate more freely. Reanalyzing the predicate of (165b) *tika-n-ıl* as double passive does not resolve the problem.

- <sup>29</sup> Erkü (1983) and Erguvanlı (1984) differ in terms of the possibility of occurrence of the indefinite NPs in the sentence initial position. This is something that Erkü accepts but Erguvanlı rejects.
- <sup>30</sup> The other form of clefting in English, the so-called wh-clefts are generally defined as focusing structures. Here we will not go into the details of both structures. We refer to these structures only to account for the Turkish equivalents.



## CHAPTER IV

### SENTENCE TOPIC AND DISCOURSE TOPIC

#### 4.0. Introduction

Discourse topic is a notion that is no less complicated than the notion of sentence topic. In this chapter, we will take the notion of discourse topic simply as “what the discourse is about” and our primary interest will be on the notion of *topic continuity* rather than the discourse topic itself. In other words, we will basically review the discourse structure in terms of the ways and means of coding topic continuity and try to identify the interaction between sentence topic and discourse topic. More specifically, following the functional grammar approach, we will assume that a sentence topic is a discourse topic that is marked at the sentence level. This does not mean that, one will find the discourse topic somehow coded in each sentence of the discourse. Although this is mostly the case, coding of discourse topic in a discourse sentence is not always signaled by the “referent” itself. There are a number means of signaling the discourse



topic at the sentential level. This chapter will be illustrative of some cases where discourse topic is represented at the sentence level; however, the analysis presented here does not aim to be comprehensive.

#### 4.1. Discourse Topic : Introducing and Maintaining

We have already seen how “external” function of language shapes the organization of sentences as well as the use of grammatical means for the fulfillment of this function. It is at the discourse level that we observe how linguistic forms are fit into the communicative needs of the humans and their cognitive processes.

In its broadest sense, discourse can be taken as any kind of coherent text which is “about” certain entities (Dik, 1989:266). **Discourse topic**, then, in a similar manner to sentence topic, is what the discourse is about. However, a discourse, depending many other external factors, may have different discourse-topics, where some of these topics may appear more central to the discourse than others. Hence, besides the implications for a hierarchy of topics in a discourse, it is always possible to shift from the **established** topic to **subtopics** and vice versa. As Dik (1989:267) puts it, even in the local sense, a discourse is formed by a number of subtopics:

In an abstract sense we may think of the discourse as containing a ‘topic store’ which is empty at the beginning of the discourse (unless the topic has been fixed in advance, as for a meeting or lecture), and which is gradually being filled with D-topics as these are introduced into the discourse. Some D-topics will be

short-lived, and disappear quickly, others will be more pervasive and kept alive all through the discourse

For a topic to be “pervasive” and “kept alive”, each sentence in a discourse is said to be contributing to the content of the discourse topic through different “cross-referential” links established across sentences. Hence, an established topic of a discourse is “continued” until the introduction of a new topic ( Givón, 1983; Hannay, 1991; Reinhart, 1981). With regard to the terms that we have been using in this study, topic continuity can be understood as the continuation of “information flow”. Once a topic is established, until the introduction of a new topic, it will be interpreted as “given” information, and this is well observed throughout the sentences following the sentence where the topic is said to be established. In other words, from the viewpoint of information structure of each sentence, the established topic will be expected to occur in a declining salience. Note that this appears to be a contradictory statement in the sense that the most salient referential entity, i.e., the discourse topic, is not occurring as the most salient entity in the sentences that make up the discourse.

The key notion here, then, is the notion of topic continuity which interacts with a number of determinants including both linguistic and extra-linguistic factors. The extra-linguistic factors that contribute to the topicality of the discourse are either marked through the overt use of formal means or are inferable from the context of the discourse. Hence, even in the absence of the specific markers, pragmatic aboutness is maintained throughout the discourse.

In the following section, we will try to indicate how sentence topics interact with the overall “aboutness” of the discourse. We will see how information structure of each sentence is shaped within the discourse and how discourse topic is represented in the sentences. Since the aim of the study is to analyze sentence topics, the considerations that will be presented here will be concerned with how sentence topics are affected from the overall organization of discourse. In this sense, the following analysis will be “local” and by no means can be taken as an analysis of the discourse itself.

#### **4.2. Sentence Topic in Discourse**

To what extent formal surface syntax interacts with the contextual knowledge in the process of communication is matter of debate. Basically, approaches advanced in this direction can be divided into two. In the first approach, the aim is to specify information status of the constituents in a structure and provide an explanation as to how these are varied against the given discourse situation by referring to the participants and the structure of the discourse itself. In other words, this approach first tries to specify the information status of the constituents, and then tries to observe how these are reflected in the syntactic constructions. The second approach develops a perspective from “inside”, where the aim is to provide an explanation to the ways and means of morpho-syntactic coding of constituents on the basis of their salience in the structure. Among the representatives of the first approach are Prague

School scholars of the earlier periods and Givón and his colleagues of more recent times. Davison and Gundel are the names generally associated with the second approach. These two approaches are not mutually exclusive, and they can even be complementary (Siewierska, 1991).

We have already presented the Functional Grammar approach to the notion of D-topic above. As it is implied in Dik's approach, in a wider perspective, discourse topic is not seen as an atomic or discrete entity but rather as a "scalar" notion where a discoursial entity is developed throughout the discourse with various contributions. It is from this perspective that we will continue our analysis on the interaction between discourse topic and sentence topic.

There is one major difference between the notions discourse topic and sentence topic. Sentence topics are generally linguistic objects which are corresponding to an expression or a grammatical form in a sentence. Discourse topics, on the other hand, though they can be expressed by a linguistic element, can be defined through the linguistic function of this element. It is constructed through the host of different factors determining the subject matter. However, it is a very uncommon situation where the discourse topic is not overtly expressed within the discourse. Moreover, analogical to the sentence topic, discourse topics are generally introduced from the outset of the discourse, due to the basic requirement for a successful communication where what is being talked about must be made explicit. Hence, the discourse topic is commonly expressed in a discourse by a lexical or a grammatical expression. Furthermore, in the

majority of cases, discourse topic coincides with the sentence topic. We will try to illustrate these in the following Turkish discourse samples.

# I.

(1) Ergonomik olmayan cep telefonları ağız ve kulakla tam uyum sağlayamaz. (2) Ø Telefonu sürekli olarak ağızdan kulağa, kulaktan ağıza götürüp getirebilirsiniz. (3) Üstelik sadece sizin sesinizi değil Ø çevre gürültülerini de taşır. (24-30 Kasım 1994, *Aktüel* 177:128)

The non ergonomic cellular phones are not compatible with the ear and the mouth. You might move the phone from mouth to ear and from ear to mouth continuously. Furthermore, it not only carries your voice but circumstantial noises as well.

The discourse topic, “telefon” is introduced in the first sentence of a discourse and it is at the same time is the topic of the sentence. Topic NP is made specific with an adnominal modifier “cep” which signals a set relationship. In (2) subject/topic becomes the object of the sentence where we observe a decline in its salience which is marked with a change in the grammatical role. Since it is inserted into the cognitive file of the addressee, it becomes an *activated* <sup>1</sup> entity and thus decline in its salience. Decline in salience is also followed by the deletion of the

premodifiers which renders the NP more specific and unique for the addressee. Additionally, where in (1) the referential status is also established through set-membership (i.e, *cep telefonu* is a member of the larger class of *telefon*) in (2), reference is established through the class label itself. All these indicate that the topic has been well established and does not need further specification for pervasiveness even in the second sentence of the discourse. Primarily for this reason, following *Universal Deletion Constraint* of Gundel (1978) a referential constituent which is activated and topic simultaneously can be deleted freely. This is exactly what we see in the third sentence <sup>2</sup>. The third sentence is also significant in that the discourse topic is raised to the sentence topic position; however, since its content is recoverable through the verbal agreement on the verb, it is deleted.

In our second sample discourse, we again see the coincidence of the sentence topic and discourse topic. However, in this example we observe a shift to a subtopic.

## II.

### Memur Şehri Ankara Memura Dar Geldi

(1) Memurlar geçen hafta ücretlerine yapılan yüzde 15 zammı protesto ettiler. (2) Ø [Ø Sendikal haklarını] istediler. (3) Ø Ülkenin çeşitli illerinde işi bıraktılar. (4) İstanbuldaki eylemler olaysız geçti. (5) Ama Ankara'da nedense herşey farklıydı. (6) Ankara Emniyet Müdürü memurları tokatladı. (7) "Müdür" tokatlar da "memur" boş durur mu! (8) Müdürün polisleri "memur beyler" de "sivil"

memurları enselerinden yakalayıp veryansın copladılar. ( 26 Ocak 1994 *Tempo*, 4)

The civil servants have protested the 15% increase to their payments last weeks. They have demanded their union rights. They have stopped working in various cities of the country. The protests in Istanbul was quite normal. However, things were for some reason different in Ankara. The police chief of Ankara have beaten the civil servants. Where the chief beats civil servants, the (police) as a civil servant would not be excepted to hesitate! The chief's servants too, grabbed the civil servants from their collars and beat them unmercifully.

Same as the first sample discourse, here again, we see the discourse topic is introduced at the outset of the discourse (the discourse topic is actually introduced in the text title, cf. Brown and Yule, 1983). The first sentence displays a number of important aspects of topicality in discourse. First, as observed by Sezer (1978) and Göksel (1987) animate subject NPs, as opposed to inanimate subject NPs, tend to display overt plural verbal agreement in Turkish <sup>3</sup>. From the discourse pragmatic perspective, overt marking of agreement is also significant. Recall that, in discussing the topic worthiness of NPs, as it is also captured in the hierarchies, we have pointed out that animate NPs are more topical than the inanimate ones at the sentential level. The overt agreement is thus motivated pragmatically where discourse topic appears at the same time as sentence topic in terms of establishing its topicality in the mind of the addressee (cf. Schroeder, 1994).



It is the inanimate NP which serves as the topic of the sentence and the discourse in our previous sample. Thus, low in referentiality, it is supported by the pronominal modifiers during the process of its establishment as a topic. Additionally, due to the low transitivity of the clause (i.e., subject is inanimate and instrument in the first sentence) it takes some time for its recognition as a topic and thus its zero representation in the discourse is delayed. However, since the topic is animate and the clause within which it appears is high in transitivity, the topic NP is immediately deleted following its activation. This again is closely related to the interaction of animacy, subjecthood and definiteness that we have been discussing throughout this study. We also observe here that, although the topic NP is plural, thus nonindividuated and figures less unique, its syntactic position, i.e., sentence initial position, renders it as a definite NP. These and other relevant issues explain why the topic NP is deleted from the discourse immediately after its introduction in (2) and (3).

In (4) and (5) we observe a shift to a *frame* or *scene* where it is not the “memurlar” but it is what they did in where is what matters. This is partially due to the title and the text interaction. Note that while the title is about the *place* where “memur” is only interpreted as a nominal premodifier, the discourse starts with the sentences in which it is not the place but the “memur” that figures as the sentence topic in the first three sentences. This should again be taken as an indication of preference towards the animate NPs selection as a topic. The coding of “place” where the actions performed by the animate NPs is observed only through marked structures in contexts where occurs “contrastive topic” markers in the sense of Haiman (1978) and Schiffirín (1992). Topic continuity in the



remaining sentences is supplied by the lexical occurrence of the topic NP as a full lexical NP, though in (7) and (8) “memur” refers to different set of individuals than the topic of discourse refers. Similar to the first sample discourse, the coding of activated topic is differentiated through marking with different grammatical and semantic roles. The change in grammatical roles does not affect the animacy and definiteness of the discourse topic NP.

### III.

1. Erkekler için gömlek vazgeçilmez ve şık bir giysi. 2. Dufy de, yıllardır alıştığımız Ø klasiklerine yepyeni modeller ekleyerek sonbahar kış sezonunu açtı. 3. Dufy koleksiyonlarında Avrupa'dan ithal kumaşlar ön planda. 4. Yakalarda İngiliz ve İtalyan sitiline uygun modern formlar kullanılıyor. 5. Dügmeli yakaların yanında kravatı daha iyi gösteren geniş aç kesimli yakalar da bu yıl oldukça moda. (24-30 Kasım 1994 *Aktüel*, 177: 152)

For men, the shirt is an elegant wear. Dufy, the classics of which we have already accustomed to for over years, too, has opened the fall-winter season with brand new additions to its collection. In Dufy's collections, fabrics imported from Europe figure out prominently. In collars, we observe modern forms fitting to English and Italian style. Besides the buttoned ones, wide-cut collars which display the tie more effectively are also fashionable in this season.

The topic of the discourse here, again, an inanimate NP, “gömlek”. The striking feature of this sample discourse is that, the discourse topic NP does not recur in the following sentences as a full lexical NP. Topic continuity is achieved via the inferable discourse referents each are forming *subtopics* which in turn contribute to the topicality of the text. Primarily due to the establishment of topic continuity through subtopics, sentences include frame setting elements. Locative expressions, occurring sentence initially, are the formal markers of this function.

To make an inanimate topic NP more specific and thus more *identifiable* and *unique*, relative clauses and other adnominal modifiers are used frequently in the text. Except (2), all the sentences that build up the discourse are either non-verbal, i.e., substantive or passive. This indicates that, these sentences do not include any agentive subject NP, and the sentences are either expressing an equation relation or state (cf. 3.2.1.2). In other words, the use of substantive sentences contribute to the topicality of the inanimate topic NP through further qualification of its properties. (4) is the only passive sentence where the inanimate subject NP is again premodified.

The major relation type that constitutes the coherence of the discourse is the so-called “set-subset” relation. In Functional Grammar terms, set-subset relation generally forms the subtopics of the discourse. Hannay (1985:57) proposes the following pragmatic rule for the subtopic formation <sup>4</sup>:

If an entity X has been activated in the given setting, then the speaker may present an entity Y as a sub-Topic entity, if Y R X, where R is a relationship of inference

The relationship of inference, as can be understood from the above principle, is a general one which includes a number of specified *types*. *Part of*; *member of*; *subset of*; *instance of*; *copy of*; *aspect of*; *opposite of*; *associated with*; are the specified types of this inference relationship. In our sample discourse, we observe both *part of* and *associated with* relations among the sentences. The use of substantives becomes more meaningful, given the type of relationship of coherence here, since, by definition, *part of* relationship is expressible through substantives.

The sentence in which the topic of the discourse is introduced is expressing a general statement where subset relation can also be inferred: *giysi - gömlek*. Following its activation, i.e., its introduction to the cognitive file of the addressee, the related subtopics are introduced into the discourse. *Dufy*, a proper name and thus a definite NP and which is assumed to be known to the addressee, forces the addressee to form an associative relation with the activated topic. Here, *known to the addressee* means that the referent of *Dufy* and its association to the discourse topic is assumed to be *semi-active* in the *permanent registry* of the addressee and deletion of “*gömlek*” in the second sentence is recoverable on the part of the addressee. The overt occurrence of *Dufy* in the third sentence also contributes to the identification of the semi-activated topic. The remaining two sentences are coding the *part of* relation with the discourse topic through the use of NPs, *yaka*, and *kravat*.

The sample discourse here, exemplifies the role and function of subtopics in the continuity of discourse topic. The discourse topic NP occurs only once in the discourse and subtopics are providing necessary information that is required for the topic continuity. The subtopics are not

coreferential with the activated topic of the discourse. It is for this reason that the notion of subtopic is introduced into the analyses primarily due to the mode of relationship between the activated and semi-activated discourse entities. Generally, it is assumed that anaphoricity is not the determining factor in distinguishing topics from subtopic, or evoked discourse entities from the inferable discourse entities. Hence, in our sample discourse, we observe that the major relation type is the so-called **indirect anaphora** in the sense of Erkü and Gundel (1987). Since there is no coreferential relation established between discourse entities, anaphoricity is signaled only indirectly. What establishes topic continuity is, then, the set-subset relation which appears in its two specified forms, namely, *part of* and *associated with* in our sample discourse. As it is indicated above, establishing relations through these two types also explains the use of substantives in the discourse. The set-subset relation is important in many respects. It not only permits the formation of subtopics, but it also overrides the anaphoricity and coreferentiality relation to be signaled overtly. Additionally, it is also important in terms of the NP semantics that we have been discussing throughout this study. The set-subset relation makes it possible for the indefinite NPs to function as sentence topics in the discourse without disturbing the topic continuity 5.

Starting from the first sample discourse, we have tried to indicate the relationship between sentence topic and discourse topic. Common to all our discourse samples, the discourse topic is introduced in the first sentence of the discourse. As we have indicated before, though this is not an obligatory condition, discourse topics are introduced as sentence topic at the same time. In our first sample discourse, the topic is an inanimate

NP and following its activation, we see its disappearance gradually. In other words, in accordance with the general principle of topic coding, once it is established in the discourse domain, it is less likely to be coded as a full lexical NP. In our second sample discourse, an animate NP is the topic and as we have seen, it was able to trigger plural agreement on the verb which in turn is identified as another formal marker of topic continuity. In the third sample discourse, we have seen that, topic continuity can be maintained in the absence of direct anaphoric relations, and this is possible through set-subset relation. Hence, indirect anaphora can be sufficient for the continuity of the discourse topic.

In our fourth sample discourse, discourse topic is again introduced in the first sentence as a full lexical NP. The sample discourse displays three of the five coding devices of Givón's topic continuity scale.

#### IV.

1. Varlık yıllardan beri, on dokuz yıldan beri, Øi gençliğini yitirmeden çıkıyor. 2. Çağımızın en iyi şairlerini Øi tanıttı, yine de yeni şairler, yeni yazarlar Øi arıyor. 3. Ø Her sayısını ilgi ile beklerim, beni bir umut kırıklığına uğratan Øi sayıları olmamıştır demeyeceğim, pek azdır. 5. Øi Hiç değilse küçük bir şiir getirir, bu da edebiyatı gerçekten sevenler için büyük bir armağandır. (Nurullah Ataç, *Dergilerde*, 7)

Varlık has been published for more than nineteen years without losing anything from its freshness. It has introduced us the best poets of our age and still looking for new poets, new authors. I look forward to each issue with interest; I cannot say that it has had no disappointing issue, however, this has

happened quite rarely. It brings at least a short poem, and this becomes a great gift for the true lovers of literature.

The inanimate subject NP of the first sentence, a proper name, is the topic of the discourse. Throughout the discourse, it is coded in every sentence as the sentential subject. In the third sentence it occurs as the subject of the causative clause where it is coded through subset relation. As opposed to the first and third discourse samples, although it is an inanimate NP, it preserves its saliency even in the presence of an animate first person, and we observe no signal of decline in its coding. This is particularly due to the attribution of “agency” to the topic NP, i.e., the discourse topic is the “agent” of each sentence through metaphorical reading. Hence, we observe a constellation of feature on the discourse topic NP that are generally required for sentence topics, namely, agency, definiteness, and proper noun marking. Thus, when all these features are associated with an NP, it will become a highly referential nominal.

In the first sentence, discourse topic is marked with an overt lexical NP; the second sentence codes the topic through a third person pronoun which indicates a coreferential relation and establishes the topic-hood of its referent strongly. The remaining sentences code the topic through agreement and possessive suffix. In terms of the code-quantity principle of Givón (1988:249), starting from the most predictable/accessible referent the amount of phonological material used to code the topic decreases. This, in effect means that once the topic is established, due to its accessibility or predictability in the universe of discourse, less

linguistic material will be employed to code the topic. The code-quantity scale is defined as follows (Givón, 1988:249) 6:

most predictable/accessible continuous referent

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- a. zero anaphora
  - b. unstressed/ clitic pronoun ('agreement')
  - c. stressed/ independent/contrastive pronoun
  - d. full DEF-noun
  - e. restrictively-modified DEF-noun
- 

least predictable/accessible continuous referent

In terms of the coding scale above, discourse topic is coded through (d) to (a) in our last sample, if null subject is interpreted as zero anaphora (cf. 3.4.1). Recall that the inanimate discourse topics of the first and third samples are introduced with premodifiers, corresponding to (e) in this scale.

Finally, we would like to note that overt coding of discourse topic, in terms of the syntactic position in which it can appear, is not limited to subject and object positions. Discourse topics can also occur postverbally and their postverbal occurrence has no impact on their identification unless they are activated in the previous sentences. In other words, once they are activated and entered into the cognitive file of the addressee, discourse topics can occur in any sentence position, if they occur at all.



## Conclusion

In this chapter we have tried to indicate some strategies of coding discourse topic. We have concentrated primarily on discourse topic — sentence topic interaction. In other words, we have tried to follow discourse topic in each sentence of the discourse, especially tried to identify those structure which code the topic after its introduction and establishment. More specifically, we have tried to observe how topic continuity is maintained throughout the discourse.

We have seen that the notions that we have discussed for topicality at the sentential level are also relevant at the discoursial level. For example, depending on the semantic properties of the particular discourse topic NP, we have seen different coding strategies. Inanimate NPs when chosen as discourse topics are generally introduced with overt lexical NPs with some sort of premodification. This is partly due to the lower ranking of inanimate NPs in the referentiality scale. Thus premodification contributes to their definiteness and hence their referentiality which is required for their unique identification by the addressee. Once a topic is established less material is used for its coding in the subsequent sentences. This decline is observed in the change of grammatical roles, i.e., moving downwards in the grammatical role hierarchy. We have also observed that the overt coding of anaphoricity is not a necessary condition for topic continuity. In the absence of overt coreferential links, indirect anaphora, i.e., set-subset relation with its specified forms is sufficient in establishing topic continuity. Topic function in a discourse is assigned to a nominal in general and this nominal is interpreted as referring to an



entity where the speaker assumes that it is the part of the shared information of the participants of a discourse. The referent of the topic NP is also considered to be inferrable from the universe of discourse and the speaker identifies this expression as an appropriate foundation for the construction of the discourse.

Since it is not the aim of this study to provide a detailed account of discourse analysis, or analysis of discourse topics, we do not refer to broader discourse perspectives. Here, we will limit ourselves to the possibility of overlappings between discourse topics and sentence topics. Assuming that a coherent discourse is constructed around a single topic and that each sentence in a discourse contributes to the identification and maintaining of the topic, some reflection of discourse topic is traceable in the discourse sentences. There are, however, different formal means of coding the discourse topic in each sentence, as we have tried to illustrate some sample cases of it in this chapter.

## Notes to Chapter IV

- <sup>1</sup> Concerning the status of referent in short term memory, the concept of *activation* is proposed by functionalists (Chafe 1987; Lambercht 1988). Chafe (1987:25) maintains 3 types of activation for a discourse referent:

*An active referent* is taken to be one "that is currently lit up a concept in a person's focus of consciousness at a particular moment." It is given information.

*A semi-active referent* is one "that is in a person's peripheral consciousness, a concept of which a person has a background awareness,"but which is not being paid direct attention. It constitutes the inbetween category which is described by means of such terms as accessible, recoverable, derivable and discourse bound. The referent can be accessible because it is activated earlier or it is inferrable from the information that is activated earlier.

*An inactive referent* is one "that is currently in a person's long-term memory, neither focally nor peripherally active." It is totally a new information.

- <sup>2</sup> There are other linguistic means that establish "coherence" between sentences of this discourse. The overt lexical repetition of *ağız*, *kulak*, *ses*, etc. contribute to the coherence of the text in the sense of Halliday and Hasan (1976).
- <sup>3</sup> Lewis (1967) also notes the cases where overt marking of verbal agreement is obligatory. However, he relates the obligatoriness to the notion of "distance" rather than animacy.

- <sup>4</sup> Subtopics and their interpretation vary in different approaches to the discourse. The terms “inferreable”, “bridging assumptions”, “indirect anaphora” are used to designate the same concept by different scholars.
- <sup>5</sup> The role and the function of pragmatic set relations in topicalization have been discussed in detail in the works of Prince (1981b, 1985); Ward and Prince (1991) and Reinhart (1981).
- <sup>6</sup> Kerslake (1987) applies this scale to the Turkish narrative texts. However, her analysis is based on the previous model of Givón, i.e., Givón (1983). She analyses the discourse situations where zero vs. pronominal anaphora is used.



## CONCLUSION

The first large scale approach to language universals of Greenberg states in its first universal that human languages place the subject before the object in the basic order. For a functional approach to language, this general tendency should be interpreted in functional terms, and a number of general principles have emerged which try to capture the psychological and cognitive implications of this “preferred” order. Among these, we have Tomlin’s *Theme First Principle*, Givón’s *Attend the Most Urgent Information*, Gundel’s *Given Before New*, or, *First Things First*. All these principles underlie the tendency of the humans to structure their sentences in accordance with the information status of the sentential elements. The patterning of the sentential constituents is sensitive to the “newness” and “givenness” of information, and in any communicative process judgments of information status is ultimately decided by the context.

The general task for functional approach is, then, to provide a model of explanation for the organization and use of formal means in the coding of information structure. Ordering of the constituents in a sentence appears as the most prominent formal device to be investigated. In other words, linearization or serialization of information is coded at the sentence level by the relative ordering of the information bearing

elements. This implies that in the unmarked case certain syntactic positions are preferred for the occurrence of specific information units. Any variation from the preferred order is thus interpreted as a change in the packing of information. Given the *subject-before-object* preference of the majority of the languages of the world, it is the subject position that is reserved for the coding of given information to ease the processing. Similar to the general functional principles of “naturalness”, Dik (1989) proposes a general principle of ordering to capture the form-function interaction in the serialization of information. *LIPOC*, is an attempt to derive a universal order which tries to specify the tendencies of occurrences of information bearing elements in specified syntactic positions in accordance with their status.

Crosslinguistic studies conclude that grammatical roles and especially the subject role, cannot be easily identified. Languages display varying strategies in marking the fundamental grammatical roles which make it hard for a universalist to propose a generalization. It is primarily for this reason that “external” functions enter into the proposed universals. Thus, any explanation of linguistic structure refers to syntax, semantics, and pragmatics simultaneously. For the subject role, for example, explanations include such notions as agency and topichood. Here again, we see the dominance of the pragmatic function: despite differences in its marking or changes in its semantic role, subjects are always interpreted as topics. Subjects can be marked in different ways: through their syntactic position, case marking, or through agreement or coindexation. In terms of their semantic roles, subjects can be agents, patients, instruments and so on. No matter how they are marked or whatever semantic role they express, crosslinguistic studies conclude that

in the unmarked order, subjects always coincide with the topic. It is primarily for this reason that subjects precede the objects in the languages of the world.

The typology of Li and Thompson (1976) indicates that in the marking of topic in a sentence some languages use overt markers. The so-called topic prominent languages include in their grammar a special morpheme specifically used to mark the NP in a sentence which serves the topic function. Other languages which do not have a topic marker employ word order in the marking of the sentence topic. Thus, the typology, in a sense, draws a distinction between morphological and syntactic marking.

Using case system in marking the grammatical and hence semantic roles, Turkish displays certain characteristic features of the rich case system languages, i.e., SOV order, zero anaphora, and more specifically, free word order. It has been argued that since grammatical roles are marked with morphology, the function of the word order in Turkish is to signal the information structure. In other words, word order encodes the pragmatic information through imposing restrictions on certain syntactic positions. When case marking is not retained, word order, similar to English, also signals the grammatical roles in terms of their relative sequence in a sentence.

Sentence-initial position is defined as the sentence topic position in Turkish in a number of studies. It follows that, in the unmarked case, subjects are topics in Turkish. Here we have argued that subjects are marked in three possible ways in Turkish: Turkish sentences never allow two nominatives in a sentence; when there are two nominals with

nominative marking in a sentence, the sentence initial position identifies the subject. Thus, subjects can be identified by case marking as well as by word order. Additionally, Turkish identifies subjects through indexation, i.e., there is always only one NP in a sentence that can “agree” with the verb.

We have argued that as long as the case marking is preserved, any NP that moves to the sentence initial position functions as the sentence topic. In this respect, we have argued, as opposed to other studies on topic function of NPs in a Turkish sentence, that the moved NP should bear a grammatical role to the predicate. This is actually one of the properties that Li and Thompson (1976) assign to the topic NPs. The reason behind this is to distinguish between NPs selected by the verb and the obliques functioning as adverbials. Hence, an NP with an adverbial function when moved to the topic position will be treated as a “frame” setting element rather than as a topic. This is what we have assumed at the beginning of the study, and throughout our discussions we have tried to prove our point. In nonverbal sentences, for example, we have seen that nominals other than subject, i.e., those which do not bear any grammatical role to the predicate, function as frame elements. Similarly, in discussing intransitives, we have referred to the role of the oblique NPs and concluded that even when they occur sentence initially, they would not receive topic interpretation. In accordance with our first assumption stated in the introduction, we conclude that sentence topic function is limited to the nominals with a grammatical role. Thus, although it is possible to locate “any” NP to the sentence initial position, via the freeness provided by case marking, this is not the sole factor involved in topic interpretation.

Our second assumption concerns the status of obliques in topic interpretation. We have referred to the role of the obliques especially when we are discussing the intransitive clauses. We have seen that indefinite subject NPs of the intransitives tend to occur preverbally. Thus, any oblique NP, occurring with the indefinite subject NP in intransitive clauses and their relative ordering, play an important role in the grammaticality of these sentences. In this respect, we have argued that “selection” of a particular oblique NP instead of another would render the sentence grammatical. Since the relevance of the unaccusative-unergative distinction of the intransitive verb for Turkish is an issue of debate, we have referred to the notion of semantic bondedness in our description. This notion does not only refer to the notion of “order” but also refers to the semantics of the verb. As we have tried to show in our analysis, intransitive verbs, due to their semantics, required oblique NPs signaling different semantic roles. Oblique NPs that fulfill the context created by the verb, or more specifically, compatible with the semantics of the verb displayed certain ordering restrictions. In other words, they do not only affect the grammaticality of the sentences with indefinite subject NPs, but also their relative ordering is significant.

The third assumption of the study focuses on the dative marking and its impact on topic interpretation. Crosslinguistically, dative appears to have a dual function. It is interpreted as a grammatical case since it marks the so-called indirect objects. It is also interpreted as a semantic case since it marks a variety of semantic roles including recipient, beneficiary, and direction. Along the lines suggested by Croft (1991), we have argued that grouping the different semantic roles that dative expresses under a unified term of goal is counter-intuitive. To analyze



each role separately is necessary to the extent that beneficiary and recipient roles are generally assigned to animate entities as opposed to direction. In this respect, we have argued that direction role bearing NPs, when they occur sentence initially, serve as frame element rather than sentence topic. Since dative marking is obligatory in Turkish, dative marked NPs can occur freely in any syntactic position. Thus “dative shift” in Turkish, as with other marked grammatical role bearing nominals, do not lead to change in the grammatical roles. Furthermore, since dative marking is obligatory, dative marked NPs will always be definite and high in referentiality.

Our fourth assumption refers to the role of transitivity in topicalization process. We have applied the Transitivity Hypothesis of Hopper and Thompson (1980) in our analysis of sentences and tried to illustrate the role of the two components of the hypothesis, individuation and affectedness in the marking of “objects”. These two notions were extremely important in that they highly correlate with the notions of animacy and definiteness. The importance of these notion lies in the fact that sentence initial position of Turkish sentences is sensitive to the notion of definiteness and animacy. Since Turkish heavily relies on NP-fronting in alternating information flow, the NPs to be moved to this position should fulfill these semantic requirements. Thus, degree of affectedness and individuation can be taken as “grammaticalization” of the notions of animacy and definiteness.

The final assumption of the study concerns the notion of perspective or orientation. Here we have argued that when one adopts the view that topicalization is in fact a process whereby a “new” perspective is set as a

result of its application, then a number of structures with different properties can be seen as topic creating structures. In this respect we have indicated that although subject deletion and subject relativization empty the sentence initial position, this does not result in a new topic-comment structure. Subject relativization results in a structure where the entire clause is related to the head, i.e., the clause is "about" its head but not the sentence. Subject deletion, on the other hand, does not make the sentence-initial element topic of the sentence, and retains the presence of the "topic" in the sentence. Passives and subject incorporating structures, as opposed to subject deletion and subject relativization, set the sentence perspective from the viewpoint of the patient. Universally, passivization is defined as a process whereby subject argument is demoted. What happens in subject incorporation structures is similar to the passives in that generally the nondefinite inanimate NP is not permitted to set the sentence perspective especially where there is an object NP which is higher in the animacy hierarchy.

We have indicated right at the beginning of the study that a study of sentence topic should make reference to the three broad areas of linguistic research; syntax, semantics, and pragmatics. Comrie (1981:114), based on his study on functional universals concludes that:

There seems to be a general bias in language, interacting with naturalness of identification of subject with agent or patient, towards nominative-accusative syntax. This general bias, in turn, has explanation: ... humans have a strong tendency to select more agentive entities as topics of discussion, which means that there is a natural correlation between agent and topic: other things being equal, one would expect agent and topic coincide. The notion of subject then simply reflect the grammaticalization of this expected

coincidence, and explains why so many languages do have a grammatical relation of subject definable in its core as the intersection of agent and topic, whereas few languages similarly define grammatical relations reflecting the intersection of, say patient and topic.

It appears that, in a functional approach to language, the term, topic-subject-agent, corresponding to the research areas of syntax, semantics, and pragmatics inevitably require the presence of one another.

The syntax of sentence topic extends beyond the mere considerations of grammatical roles. More importantly, it concerns the different topicalization processes in different languages and illustrates how languages use their formal means to fulfill communicative requirements. Alternations from the basic order are not governed by grammatical principles alone; they are sensitive to the communicative needs and the ways people attribute properties to the entities that they refer to when communicating. The way a grammar of a particular language adopts itself to the expression of communicative needs determines the number and the types of topic creating structures.

It is an already established fact that since grammatical roles are marked by means of cases in Turkish, the word order functions to indicate pragmatic roles. When there is no marking or identical marking, word order functions as a grammatical role identifying device. In addition to these functions, word order in Turkish also functions as definitivizer, that is, nominals occurring sentence-initially receive definite interpretation. Finally, as argued by Erguvanlı (1986), word order plays a crucial role in the establishment of coreferential relations between the referring

expressions. The analysis presented here provided no contradictory conclusion to these proposed functions of word order in Turkish.

Adopting a functional approach to Turkish, we have tried to develop a new outlook in the analysis of the sentence structure in Turkish. The structures that we have referred mostly are studied before in detail. Our aim is not to study these structures as an end in itself but to evaluate them in terms of topicalization process. Following are the main conclusions of this attempt:

1. Subjects are topics in the unmarked case. Subject in Turkish is marked in three possible formal means; word order, case marking, and verbal agreement. In the absence of case marking (of other NPs, not the subject alone) word order marks the subject. Nominative marking is reserved for the subject NP. Any other NP with the nominative marking, or more properly without case marking will be interpreted as incorporating object. Finally, it is only the subjects that agree with the verbs in terms of number and person. This property differs Turkish from a number of free word order languages which also display object agreement.

Animacy and definiteness of the subject NP decide subject NP's syntactic position. Subject NPs that are low in animacy and definiteness tend to occur preverbally. This is exemplified more clearly in the subject incorporating structures. The role of the animacy of subject NPs is also clear from the fact that they are more likely to trigger plural person agreement.

2. Animacy and definiteness restrictions also apply to object NPs when they are moved to the topic position. In this sense, object marking gain

importance. Nonmarked objects obligatorily incorporate with the verb, however, it is possible to mark the incorporating NPs with the accusative. Even when they are incorporated, these object NPs fill the object slot and behave exactly the same with the ordinary object with respect to grammatical role changing operations. From the functional point of view, we have interpreted such properties of object NPs not only in terms of the individuation or affectedness of the object NPs in question, but argued that "choice" of incorporating or nonincorporating an object NP for the speaker is a discourse-dependent selection. In other words, speakers are provided with an option of presenting an object into a discourse either as a definite and a referential entity or as a nonreferential categorial entity.

3. Indirect objects have the greatest freedom of occurrence since they are obligatorily marked with case. Dative marking of indirect object NPs renders them definite and since dative generally marks animate NPs, these NPs also less restricted from occurring sentence-initially.

4. As for the cases, we have argued that a case marker occurs only once in sentence and if it is a grammatical case, it unambiguously marks a grammatical role. When the same case marker occurs more than once in a sentence, it marks a different grammatical role in each time and word order comes into play in the identification of these particular grammatical roles. Accusative marks the object NP in a sentence and it also functions as definitivizer. Animate objects are obligatorily marked with the accusative no matter how definite they are. It expresses total affectedness of the patient in terms of transitivity. Dative has dual function: it either marks the indirect object or marks the obliques for a number of different semantic roles. From a functional perspective we have

argued that dative is the marker of “reduced” transitivity, or in other words, it marks those NPs that are less affected by the performance of the agent. This provides us a chance of developing a unified approach to dative marking; it explains the idiosyncratic dative marking in “oblique transitives” such as psychological state verbs like, *kızmak*, *inanmak*, etc. Semantic cases express a variety of semantic relations, including direction, source, cause, among others and generally identified with satellite constituents. Semantic cases are also used to mark the degree of affectedness of object NPs in Turkish. As with dative, the function of semantic cases is to mark the partial affectedness of objects is clear from their behavior with respect to the grammatical role changing processes. They do not function as grammatical role marker, but rather markers of the semantic status of the NPs.

5. Functionally, we have interpreted subject incorporating structure in contrast with the passive. As opposed to passive, subject incorporation creates a new topic-comment structure while allowing subject NP to occur in the sentence. Passives are less felicitous with the presence of subject NP marked by *tarafından* phrase. Subject incorporating structures cannot passivize.

6. Reinterpreting topicalization as a perspective setting operation, a number of structures in Turkish can be taken as topic creating structures. This, then, provides a basis for scaling topic creating structures. The least marked topic creating structure is NP fronting in Turkish. Clefting is the most marked topic creating structure. Actually, given the fact that, as long as case marking is retained, any NP with a proper case marking can

move to the topic position. From this point of view, all the remaining topic structures can be identified as highly marked structures.

Studies on language universals assert that ordering of constituents is not random and the way language users select and organize the constituents in any structure is determined by pragmatic concerns. Hence, both the existence and form of a linguistic means is only explainable by reference to the general functional principles.

The ordering principles that are proposed by different scholars are not limited to those that we have presented here. There are cases where social conventions are represented in sequencing the expressions; in many languages, for example, although first person heads the person hierarchy, it occurs relatively late when conjoined with other nominals: *Max, Ed, and I*; *My dog and I*, are the examples that Allan (1987) gives. When it comes to ordering of expressions in Thai, Allan (1987:75) seems to have no answer:

“ And why do Thais talk about *chua di*: ‘ bad [and] good’ rather than good and evil? Is it Buddhist cosmology again? A much more extensive investigation needs to be undertaken; after which many of the current puzzles and exceptions will perhaps be properly accounted for.”

What we propose for further research on sentence topic is to look more extensively to the other hierarchies and their relevance for Turkish. Each ordering preference that can be identified through more comprehensive investigations might bring new insights and implications towards the better understanding of the factors that determine human communication.



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Tezin Başığı : FUNCTIONAL UNIVERSALS AND SOME ASPECTS  
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Adı, Soyadı : Yeşim Aksan

## TÜRKÇE ÖZET

Bu çalışmanın amacı, Türkçe basit tümcelerde *tümce konusuna* bütüncül bir yaklaşım geliştirmektir. Çözümleme, sözdizimi, anlambilimi ve edimibilimine gönderme yapmaktadır. Çalışmanın kuramsal dayanaklarını işlevci yaklaşımın *dil evrenceleri* incelemeleri oluşturmaktadır.

I. bölümde tümce konusunu betimlemede “ilişkin olma” kavramının en kapsayıcı olduğu öne sürülmüş, temel dizim kavramı incelenmiş, temel dizimi oluşturan dil içi ve dil dışı etkenlerin tümce birimlerinin dizimde birbirlerini nasıl etkiledikleri tartışılmıştır.

II. bölüm *tümce konusu* olan adöbeklerinde görülen temel anlambilimsel özellikler üzerinde yoğunlaşmıştır. Türkçede adöbeklerinin göndergesel değerleri ile belirli olmalarını sağlayan dil öğelerinin etkileşimleri tartışılmıştır.

III. bölüm *tümce konusu* kavramı açısından değişik tümce yapılarını incelemiştir. *Bakış Açısı Oluşturma* kavramı temel alınarak, farklı yapıların bu işlevi yerine getirmedeki yeterlilikleri incelenmiştir. Yapısal kavramların işlevci açıdan yorumlanması gerektiği, özellikle *geçişlilik* kavramının temel bileşenlerinin tümce konusu yorumunu nasıl etkiledikleri gösterilmiştir.

IV. bölümde Türkçe söylem birimleri üzerinde, söylemi oluşturan tümcelerin konuları ile söylem konusu arasındaki ilişkinin nasıl kurulduğu ve nasıl süreklilik gösterdiği sergilenmiştir.

## İNGİLİZCE ÖZET

The aim of this study is to develop a unified approach to the analysis of sentence topic in Turkish simplex sentences. The analysis makes reference to syntax, semantics, and pragmatics. Functional approach to language universals form the theoretical foundations of the study.

Chapter I indicates that sentence topic can best be understood with reference to the notion of “aboutness”. This chapter also introduces the notion of basic order and the proposals relating the human cognitive processes with the conditions on the ordering of sentential constituents.

Chapter II tries to identify the semantic properties which topic NPs are assumed to be encoding. The arguments focus on the intricate relationships between the notions referentiality and definiteness. It relates these notions with the formal markers in Turkish.

Chapter III presents an analysis of sentence topic in Turkish. Starting from the nonverbal sentences, existentials and substantives, the analysis extends over to intransitives. Since these structures include only a subject NP, the role of the *oblique NPs* in these structures gain importance and the analysis focuses on their effects on topichood. Adopting the notion of ‘perspective setting’, this chapter unifies a number of structurally different constructions under the notion of ‘topic creating structures’. This chapter takes the notion of transitivity from a functional viewpoint and explains different formal markings of grammatical roles in terms of *degree of affectedness* and *individuation*.

Chapter IV tries to illustrate the relationship between sentence topic and discourse topic. It displays this relationship through the notions of topic introduction and topic continuity.