

Move to *mI*, but only if you can

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1 Introduction

1.1 Background information

- This talk is about the syntax of the polar question particle *mI* in Turkish.
 - Capital “I” signals vowel harmony.
 - The particle is glossed as PQ.
 - By “*mI*’s host”, I refer to the phrase to the left of *mI*.
 - By “XP+*mI*”, I refer to the string formed by XP and *mI*.
 - Felicity conditions of questions are left aside (Zimmer 1994, Kamali 2011).
- The particle turns a declarative into a polar question.

(1) a. Can muz-u yedi.
Can banana-ACC ate
Can ate the banana.

b. Can muz-u yedi mi?
Can banana-ACC ate PQ
Did Can eat the banana?

mI is sentence final

- The particle’s position is relatively free in a clause. Compare (1-b), (2-a) and (2-b).

(2) a. Can mı muzu yedi?
b. Can muzu mu yedi?
Can banana ate

mI follows the subject

mI follows the object

But it must attach to the right of some constituent, (3).

(3) **mI* Can muzu yedi?

mI does not stand alone

- Other restrictions do bear on *mI*’s position.

(4) a. [Ali (**mi*) için] *(*mi*) geldi-n?
Ali PQ for PQ come-2S
Did you come for Ali?

**mI* between P and DP complement

I would like to thank our Syntax I class, and the audiences of the Syntax Workshop and the Syntax Semantics Reading Group for their comments and encouragement.

- b. [Yeşil (*mi) araba-yı] *(mi) aldı-n?
 green PQ car-ACC PQ buy-2S
 Did you buy the green car?

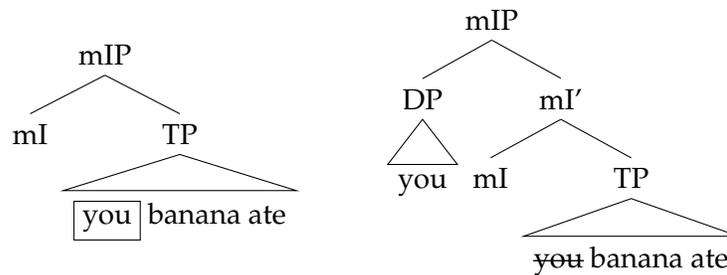
**mI* between Adj and N

1.2 Questions

- **General question:** How to account for *mI*'s distribution?
- **Specific question 1:** What is *mI*'s structural position?
- **Specific question 2:** Does *mI* form a constituent with its (prosodic) host?

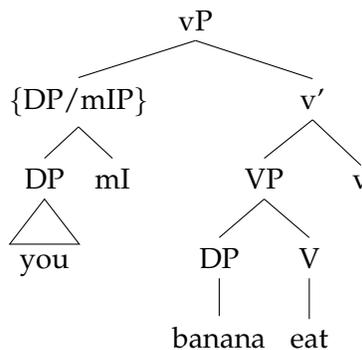
1.3 Proposal

- Motivating the **movement hypothesis:**
 1. *mI* takes the TP as its complement.
 2. *mI* attracts some XP in its scope.
- The derivation for (2-a) looks like:



Versions of the movement hypothesis are present in Besler (2000), Kamali (2011) and Kahnemuyipour and Kornfilt (2011). [The movement account is not new, but, as far as I can tell, this take on it is.]

- An alternative is the **base generation hypothesis:**
 - XP+*mI* is generated wherever XP is generated.



- Empirical differences between the two: **constituency** and **evidence for movement**.

1.4 Theoretical import

- What are hypotheses about *mI* and their predictions? How can they be tested?
- **Coverage:** root and embedded clauses, simple polar and alternative questions.
- **Simplicity and generality:** No construction or label specific stipulations (i.e. “*mI* cannot attach to adjectives”). Restrictions linked to language general facts.

2 Positioning *mI* and motivating movement

mI takes TP as its complement: Motivated by an alternation in the position of verbal morphology relative to *mI*.

2.1 Core alternation

- In the absence of the copula, tense and agreement are obligatorily to the left of *mI*:

- (5) a. Sen gel-di-n mi?
2S come-PST-2S PQ
Did you come? V > T > Agr > mI
- b. *Sen gel mi-di-n?
2S come PQ-PST-2S
Intended: Did you come? *V > mI > T > Agr

- In the presence of the copula, tense and agreement are on either side of the particle.
 - The unmarked position is when the copula and its morphology follow *mI*.

- (6) Sen hasta mı-y-dı-n?
2S sick PQ-COP-PST-2S
Were you sick? mI > V_{cop} > T > Agr

- The order where the copula and its morphology precede *mI* is marked¹.

- (7) ??Sen hasta-y-dı-n mi?
2S sick-COP-PST-2S PQ
Were you sick? ??V_{cop} > T > Agr > mI

What is the status of (7)?

- **Desideratum:** Generate (5-a), (6) [and maybe (7)]. But don't generate (5-b).
- **Assumption:** *mI* has a unique position above TP.

2.2 The V-T-Agr sequence and example derivations

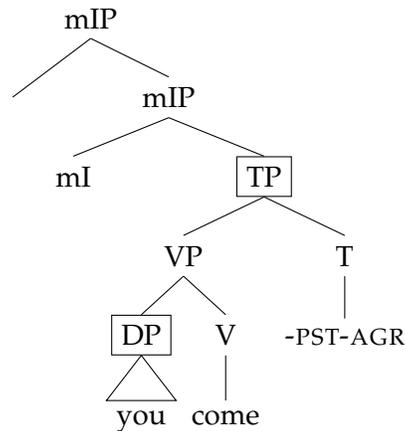
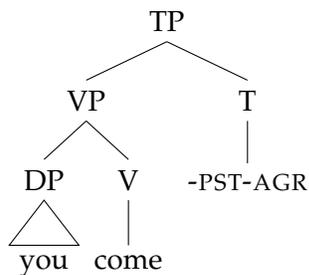
- **Observation:** In both copular and non-copular constructions, the V-T-Agr sequence is un-splittable. Compare the grammatical (5-a), (6) [and maybe (7)] to the ungrammatical (5-b).

¹Kornfilt (1996) agrees with the contrast Kahnemuyipour and Kornfilt (2011) do not.

- Movement cannot split the V-T-Agr sequence.
- Otherwise, any XP is a potential target for movement.
- In the trees below, XP indicates movable constituents.

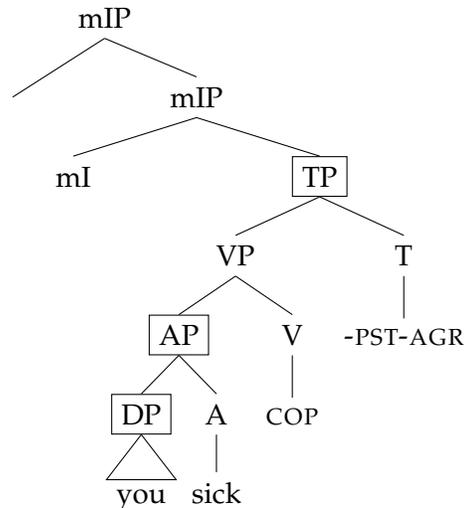
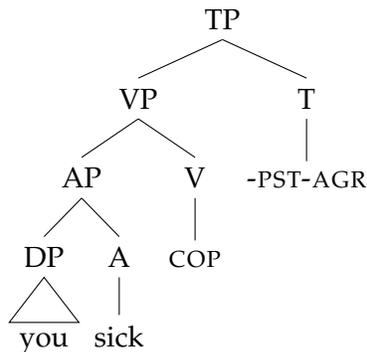
– Non-copular construction

- (8) Sen (mi) gel-di-n (mi)?
 2S PQ come-PST-2S PQ
 Did you come?



– Copular construction: AP small clause available!

- (9) Sen (mi) hasta (m1)-y-d1-n (mi)?
 2S PQ sick PQ-COP-PST-2S PQ
 Were you sick?



- These derivations show that the intended word orders can, in principle, be generated.
- But, what drives movement? Should it be constrained?

2.3.2 Possessive phrases

- Possessors can be scrambled away from the possessum.

- (13) a. ben Ali'nin arabasını aldım.
 1s Ali's car bought.1s
 b. Ali'nin ben arabasını aldım.
 Ali's 1s car bought.1s
 I bought Ali's car.

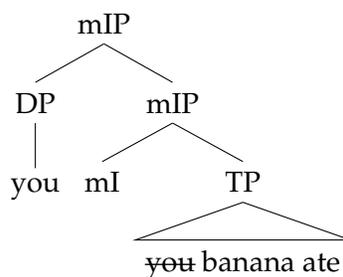
- *ml* naturally occurs between a possessor and a possessum.

- (14) a. Ben Ali'nin mi arabasını aldım?
 1s Ali's PQ car bought.1s
 b. Ben Ali'nin arabasını mı aldım?
 1s Ali's car PQ bought.1s
 Did I buy Ali's car?

- This generalization:
 - provides support for a movement based account,
 - generalizes from the restriction on splitting the V-T-Agr sequence to other restrictions on movement,
 - subsumes the restrictions on the position of *ml* under those restrictions on movement.

3 Tests: constituency and scope

- The movement hypothesis makes the prediction that *ml* and its host do not form a constituent.



- Two ways in which DP and *ml* could form a constituent:
 - *ml* adjoins to DP, the adjunction hypothesis
 - *ml* takes DP as its complement. the complementation hypothesis
- But the properties of adjunction and complementation are not satisfied.

3.1 No adjunction

- **Property of adjunction:** If *mI* adjoins to XP, [_{XP} XP *mI*] occurs in any position where XP occurs.

(15) You came here for the [_{NP} (green) [_{NP} car]].

- Restrictions on *mI*'s position do not support this hypothesis. *mI* does not have the same distribution as adjuncts.

– *mI* between P and its DP complement.

(16) *Sen [_{PP} [_{DP} araba mı] için] geldin?
 2S car PQ for came
 Intended: Did you come for the car?

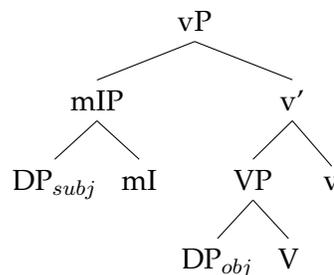
(modified from (4-a))

– Example of successful adjunction to DP complement of P

(17) a. Sen [_{PP} [_{DP} araba] için] geldin.
 2S car for came
 You came for the car.
 b. Sen [_{PP} [_{DP} yeşil araba] için] geldin.
 2S green car for came
 You came for the green car.

3.2 No complementation

- **Property of complementation:** If *mI* selects XP as its complement to form [_{mIP} XP *mI*], XP does not c-command the sister of *mIP*. (This may extend to adjunction.)



- The subject DP does not c-command the object DP.

– **Predicted:** Principle A is violated.

Observed: Principle A is satisfied.

(18) (ok) Principle A
 a. Aynada çocuklar_i birbirleri-ni_{i/*j} gördü.
 in.the.mirror kids each.other-ACC saw
 The children saw each other in the mirror.

- b. Aynada çocuklar_i mı birbirleri-ni_{i/*j} gördü?
 in.the.mirror kids PQ each.other-ACC saw
 Did the children see each other in the mirror?

- **Predicted:** Principle B is satisfied.
Observed: Principle B is violated.

(19) *Principle B

- a. Aynada Ali_i o-nu_{*i/j} gördü.
 in.the.mirror Ali 3S-ACC saw
 Intended: *Ali_i saw him_i in the mirror.
- b. Aynada Ali_i mi o-nu_{*i/j} gördü.
 in.the.mirror Ali PQ 3S-ACC saw
 Intended: *Did Ali_i see him_i in the mirror?

- **Predicted:** Principle C is satisfied.
Observed: Principle C is violated.

(20) *Principle C

- a. O_i [Ayşe'nin Ali-yi_{*i} sevdiğini] sanıyor.
 3S Ayşe Ali-ACC love believes
 Intended: He_i believes that Ayşe loved Can_{*i}.
- b. O_i mu [Ayşe'nin Ali-yi_{*i} sevdiğini] sanıyor.
 3S PQ Ayşe Ali-ACC love believes
 Intended: Does he_i believe that Ayşe loved Can_{*i}?

- **Result:** *mI* does not close off DP's c-command domain.

This is consistent with two hypotheses:

- **No movement:** *mI* is generated in a way that does not affect scope relations. (How?)
- **Movement:** DP has moved to the spine and scopes over the clause.

3.3 Movement or not?

- If the movement hypothesis is on the right track, scope relations are affected. This should be detectable.
- Testing with a long-distance effect is safer.
- Force the movement of something that is embedded: possessors.

Recall from (14) that the order “Pssr *mI* Pssm” is ok

- Possessors are embedded: no Principle C violation.

(21) [O-nun_i arkadaşı] [Ayşe'nin Ali-yi_i sevdiğini] sanıyor.
 3S-GEN friend-POSS Ayşe Ali-ACC love believes
 His_i friend believes that Ayşe likes Ali_i.

- If *mI* causes its host to raise, disjoint reference should be triggered.

(22) **O-nun_i** [mu [Δ arkadaşı] [Ayşe'nin **Ali-yi_{*i}** sevdiğini] sanıyor.]
 3S-GEN PQ friend-POSS Ayşe Ali-ACC love believes
 Does his_i friend believe that Ayşe likes Ali_i?

- Caveats:
 - Consistent with Principle C, but is it Principle C?
 - Strong pronouns and focus might interfere with coreference for independent reasons.
 - Other binding theory principles?

4 Alternative questions

4.1 Background information

In alternative questions,

- *mI* occurs as many times as there are alternatives,
- to the right of each alternative.
- Strings are unambiguously alternative questions.

(23) a. Ali mi yoksa Ayşe mi geldi?
 Ali PQ NOT.IF Ayşe PQ came
 Did Ali or Ayşe come? subject alternatives

b. Ali muz-u mu yoksa elma-yı mı yedi?
 Ali banana-ACC PQ NOT.IF apple-ACC PQ ate
 Did Ali eat the banana or the apple? object alternatives

4.2 Big disjuncts in alternative questions

- Turkish alternative questions involve **big disjuncts** with **silent material** (Gračanin-Yuksekk 2014)

One argument comes from sentences like (24) where one of the disjuncts is not a constituent. Here, the first disjunct contains a subject and a direct object, without a verb.

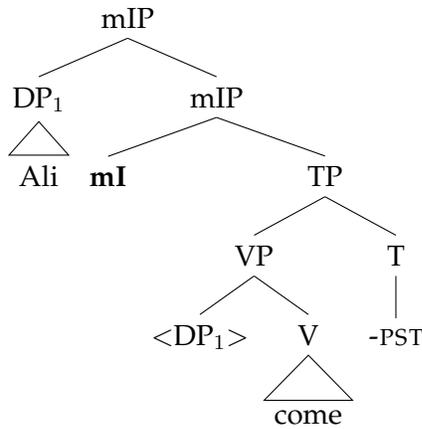
(24) [Ali Ayşe-yi mi öptü] yoksa [Can Bill-i mi öptü]?
 Ali Ayşe-ACC PQ kissed NOT.IF Can Bill-ACC PQ kissed
 Did Ali kiss Ayşe or did Can kiss Bill?

- But the “exact size” of the disjuncts remains to be determined.
- The present proposal makes a prediction:

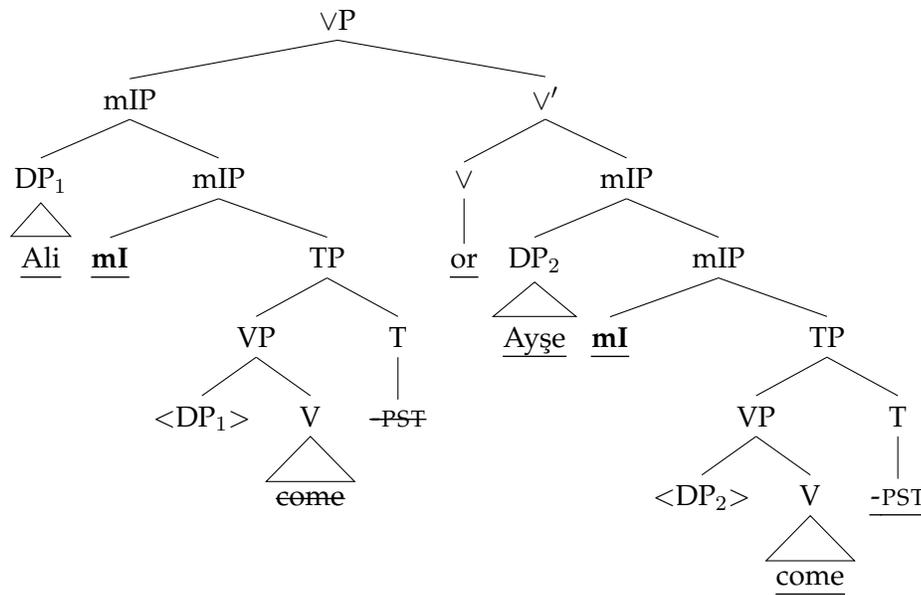
(25) a. Disjuncts are minimally mIPs.
 b. And they *must* be bigger if material precedes *mI*'s host, e.g. in (23-b) and (24).

- Derivation for (23-a)

- Each disjunct will have the following structure:



- They are brought together by the disjunction. And some material is left silent.



5 Concluding remarks

- A simple system with descriptive adequacy and predictive power.
- Constraints on the system are unexplained but Turkish general.
- Further research:
 - What drives movement?
 - Interface with semantics and phonology?

References

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Appendix

Textbook constituency tests

Tests like substitution, ellipsis, coordination or movement (Sportiche, Koopman & Stabler 2013) are not reliable for present purposes – although it is not always easy to spell out why.

Coordination

- A successful coordination test
 - (26) Can-ın arkadaşı ve Ali geldi.
Can-GEN friend and Ali came
Can's friend and Ali came.
- Test unsuccessful with *mI*
 - (27) *Can mı ve Ali geldi?
Can PQ and Ali came
Intended: Did Can and Ali come?

Substitution

- Sentence (28) features the string ‘Can mı’, whose constituency is tested.

(28) Can mı geldi?
Can PQ come
Did Can come?

- In (29), the string is apparently replaced by a pronoun. But the pair is not minimal, the question meaning is lost.

(29) O geldi.
he came

- In (30), *mI* can be added again, suggesting that in going from (28) to (29) we have not “replaced” the target string. Rather, the particle was removed and a replacement was made.

(30) O mu geldi?
he PQ came
Did he come?

Movement

- Movement targets constituents.
- (31) shows that XP+mI can be embedded, with embedded scope.

(31) Ben [senin Ali-yi mi öldürdüğünü] merak ediyorum.
I you Ali-ACC PQ kill curiosity do.1S
I wonder whether you killed Ali.

- (32) shows that XP+mI cannot be scrambled out of the embedded clause.

(32) *Ali’yi mi ben [senin Δ öldürdüğünü] merak ediyorum.
Ali-ACC PQ I you kill curiosity do.1S
Intended: I wonder whether you killed Ali.

- (32) is bad because the overt presence of *mI* licenses the type of complement clause *wonder* needs?

The failure of coordination, substitution and movement tests suggests lack of evidence that the string XP+mI forms a constituent.

Restriction: no *mI* between Adj and N

- (33) Adjective modifier: no scrambling, no *mI* intervener
- a. (*Yeşil) **ben** (yeşil) araba-yı aldım.
green I green car-ACC bought
I bought the green car.

- b. Ben yeşil (*mi) araba-yı *(mı) aldım?
 I green PQ car-ACC PQ buy
 Did I buy the green car?

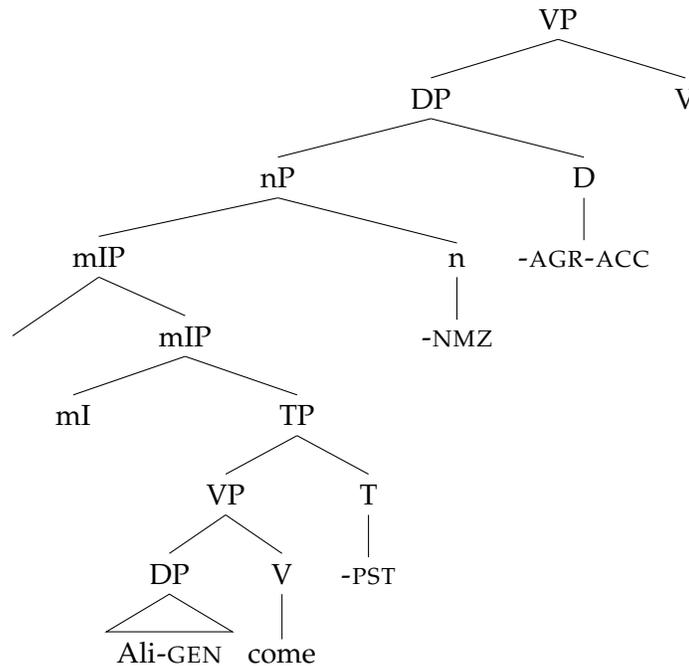
Distribution in embedded clauses

- Two types of complement clauses:
 - Nominalized,
 - Tensed.
- *mI* cannot occur at the right edge of nominalized complement clauses, (34-a), but it can occur at the right edge of tensed complement clauses, (34-b).

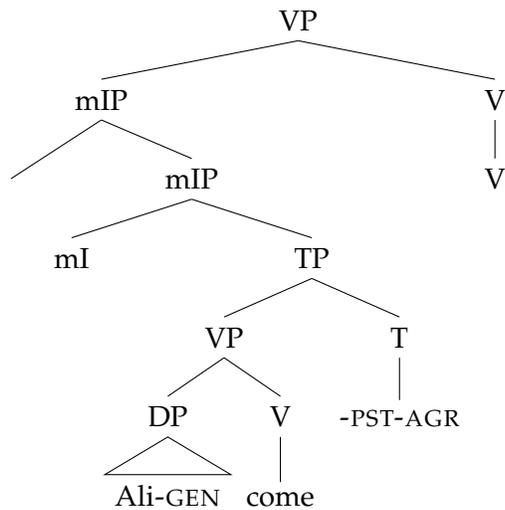
- (34) a. Ben [dün Ali-nin (mi) gel-diğ-i-ni (*mi) merak ediyorum.
 1S yesterday Ali-GEN PQ come.-NMZ-3S-ACC PQ curiosity do.1S
 I wonder whether Ali came yesterday. Nominalized clause
- b. Ben [dün Ali (mi) gel-di (mi)] merak ediyorum.
 1S yesterday Ali PQ come-PST.3S PQ curiosity do.1S
 I wonder whether Ali came yesterday. Tensed clause

- Why is the clause final position in (34-b) good but bad in (34-a)?

For (34-a) abstracting away from details about how nominal morphology is projected, there is a sense in which case and agreement is handled from “above”: *mI* is an intervener between tense morphology in the embedded clause and nominal morphology generated in the matrix clause.



For (34-b), the matrix clause is only responsible for selection.



5.1 Silent suffixes

- (35) Sen hasta m₁-y-d₁-n yoksa deli mi(-y-di-n)?
 2S sick PQ-COP-PST-2S NOT.IF crazy PQ-COP-PST-2S
 Were you sick or crazy?
- (36) Sen gel-di-n mi yoksa git-ti-n mi?
 2S come-PST-2S PQ NOT.IF go-PST-2S PQ
 Did you come or did you go?