

Not All Possessors in Turkish Are Anti-Subject Oriented

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Abstract. Turkish overt pronominal possessors of agreeing object possessives are disjoint in reference with subject coarguments of the possessive. Novel data shows that no such restriction bears upon overt possessors of non-agreeing possessives. I show that neither Principle B nor topic-driven licensing of overt pronouns adequately captures the phenomenon. Pending further research on the internal structure of (non-)agreeing possessives and on other instances of disjoint reference effects in the language, I propose the descriptive generalization that agreement is symptomatic of *pro* licensing and that it is in those positions where *pro* is licensed that overt pronouns acquire their anti-subject orientation.

1 Background: Agreement in Turkish possessives

(1) Agreeing possessives:

(O-nun) araba-sı satılık. (Overt) possessor

3S-GEN car-3S.AGR is.for.sale

His car is for sale.

Agreement morphology displays possessor person features (Kornfilt 1984).

(2) Colloquial non-agreeing possessives:

O-nun araba satılık. Overt possessor

3S-GEN car is.for.sale

His car is for sale.

Restricted in the types of possessors and possessums it can occur with (Erguvanlı Taylan & Öztürk Başaran 2014).

2 The Problem

(3) Overt agreeing possessors can't corefer with subjects

Sub	IO	Pssr	Pssm-Agr-Case	V
Ali _i	Ayşe _j 'ye	o _{*i/j} -nun	araba-sı -nı	göstermiş.
Ali	to.Ayşe	3S-GEN	car-3S.AGR-ACC	showed
Ali _i	showed	{his _i / her _j }	car	to Ayşe _j .
Ali _i	showed	{*his _i / her _j }	car	to Ayşe _j .

Ali_i Ayşe_j'ye o_{*i/j}-nun araba-sı -nı göstermiş.

Ali to.Ayşe 3S-GEN car-3S.AGR-ACC showed

Ali_i showed {his_i / her_j} car to Ayşe_j.

Ali_i showed {*his_i / her_j} car to Ayşe_j.

Dropped, Agr.; Overt, No-Agr.

Overt, Agr.

Overt possessors of agreeing possessives are "anti-subject oriented".

No such restriction for dropped agreeing or overt non-agreeing possessors.

(4) The bigger picture

a. John_i fortalte Per_j om hans_{*i/j} kone. Norwegian

John told Peter about his wife. (Hestvik 1992)

b. Ram-ne_i Ayesha-ko_j us-kii_{*i/j} kitaab dikhaai. Hindi

Ram to.Ayesha 3S-GEN book showed (R. Bhatt p.c.)

Ram showed Ayesha {*his_i / her_j} book.

Two previous types of attempts to account for the effect:

1. Subsume it under principle B (Aydın & İşsever 2012),

2. Use various independent principles on top of principle B (Kornfilt 1984, 1991, Sezer 1991, Özsoy 1992).

Correlation between anti-subject orientation and agreement in Turkish has gone unnoticed. This motivates a new description of the facts within the language and has cross-linguistic implications.

3 Principle B doesn't account for the effect

(5) Ditransitives: no Subject / IO asymmetry (this is PB)

Fotoğrafta Ali_i Ayşe_j'ye o_{*i/j}-nu göstermiş.

on.the.picture Ali to.Ayşe 3S-ACC showed

Intended: Ali_i showed {himself_i / herself_j} to Ayşe_j.

In essence: (3): ... IO_j ... possessor_j ...

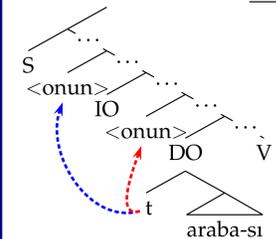
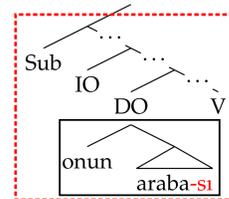
(5): * ... IO_j ... pronoun_j ...

Q1: Do the local domains of agreeing pronominal possessors include the clausal subject?

Wrong prediction: "Pssr disjoint from IO."

Per (5) IO also triggers Principle B,

But per (3) coreference with IO not ruled out.



Q2: Might agreeing possessors covertly raise to the spine?

Wrong predictions: "Pssr disjoint from IO."

Movement 1: IO triggers Principle B.

Movement 2: Possessor triggers Principle C.

Quantifier scope rigidity suggests IO > DO (Kelepir 2001).

4 "Topic switching" is a confounding factor

Why suspect something like this?

Overt possessors can't corefer with ongoing topics within or across sentence boundaries (Öztürk 2002) and subjects are good candidates for topics.

(6) Disjoint reference across a sentence boundary

Ali_i yeni bir araba aldı. ...

Ali new a car bought

(*O_i-nun) araba(-sı) çok güzel.

3S-GEN car-3S.AGR very beautiful

Intended: Ali_i bought a new car. His_i car is very beautiful.

Tentative explanation of anti-subject orientation in (3):

The subject is the topic

Overt agreeing possessor switches to a new topic

→ No coreference

Wrong prediction: "No-Agr. overt Pssr is also anti-subject oriented."

(6): Across clauses, agreement is irrelevant for disjoint reference.

(3): Within the clause, only agreeing possessors are disjoint in reference.

Interim conclusion

Topic switching doesn't account for clause internal anti-subject orientation.

Cross-linguistically anti-subject oriented pronouns are not necessarily topic switchers (e.g. Hindi, Keine 2011, Rajesh Bhatt p.c.).

5 Towards a descriptive generalization

Step 1: Null possessors are licensed in agreeing possessives, while non-agreeing possessives don't license any null possessor material.

(7) Non-agreeing possessors can't be bound

Herkes_i {pro_i araba-sın-ı / araba-yı} satmış.

everybody {pro car-3S.AGR-ACC / car-ACC} sold.3S

Everybody_i sold their_i car.

Everybody sold the car.

Agreeing

Non-agreeing

(8) Non-agreeing possessives don't license "elided" possessors.

Ben Ali'nin araba-yı sattım, Ayşe'ye bisiklet-i.

1S Ali.GEN car-ACC sold as.for.Ayşe bike-ACC

Intended: I sold Ali's car, while Ayşe sold his_i bike.

Available: I sold Ali's car, while Ayşe sold the bike.

Step 2: Agreeing null possessor positions obligatorily host pronominals.

(9) is an elision test adapted from Şener & Takahashi (2010). The second of two stacked possessives is null. The lack of a sloppy reading suggests that the null possessor is not a copy that can be bound within. Rather, it is a null pronoun coreferential with the overt possessor of the first conjunct.

(9) Possessor positions are not elision sites

Ali_i [pro_i köpeğ-i-nin]_j tasma-sı-nı kaybetmiş,

Ali pro dog-3S.AGR-GEN leash-3S.AGR-ACC lost

Ali_i lost his_i dog's leash,

Ayşe'ye e_j kemiğ-i-ni atmış.

as.for.Ayşe e bone-3S.AGR-ACC threw.away

Strict available: and Ayşe threw away its_j bone.

Sloppy unavailable: and Ayşe_k threw away her_k dog's bone.

Generalization:

Overt pronouns in positions where *pro* is licensed are in disjoint reference with the closest c-commanding subject.

6 Concluding remarks

Pending further research on the internal structure of (non-)agreeing possessives and other disjoint reference effects in Turkish, this generalization describes a filter, operating where Principle B makes the wrong prediction.

Turkish possessives suggest that ASO is a syntactic phenomenon.

- Being a pronoun, being expressed or triggering agreement are not, by themselves, sufficient conditions for being anti-subject oriented.
- ASO affects overt agreeing pronouns and the effect holds (locally) between two positions triggering agreement.
- Agreement is a symptom of *pro* licensing.
- Extending the analysis to languages without null possessors? Are there two distinct ASO mechanisms across languages?

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