# THE SYNTAX OF SUBJECT SUPPRESSION IN TURKISH

by

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# Abstract

This thesis has two aims: The first is to establish that OSV word order sentences in Turkish, along with the related Oblique-NP SV word order sentences, can have two different syntactic structures, one resulting from A-movement, and the other from A'-movement; I refer to the structures resulting from A-movement as 'subject suppression' constructions. The second aim of the thesis is to analyze the syntactic structure of subject suppression constructions. I rely on novel tests based on the semantics of specificity in Turkish to delineate the subject suppression constructions. I then propose that these constructions have their external arguments merged in the specifier of VP, and semantically interpreted via a special composition rule, as suggested by Kratzer (1996, p. 113) before being dismissed in favour of her VoiceP proposal.

*To my grandmother, Nurten Ağaoğlu*

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# Contents

# List of abbreviations

3SG = Third Person Singular

ABL = Ablative

ACC = Accusative

DAT = Dative

DOM = Differential Object Marking

DP = Determiner Phrase

EPST = Evidential Past

GEN = Genitive

LOC = Locative

NEG = Negation

NP = Noun Phrase

POSS = Possessive

PROG = Progressive

PST = Past

REL = Relative

Q = Question

# Chapter 1

# Subject Suppression in Turkish

## 1.1 Introduction

This chapter outlines the facts of constructions in Turkish that I will refer to as 'subject suppression' constructions.[1] The chapter also provides additional facts about the language that are necessary to show that subject suppression must involve a distinct syntactic structure. While what I am calling 'subject suppression' constructions have been previously discussed in literature, I am not aware of any attempt to conclusively delineate them from other constructions that look similar, but have very different interpretations. The chapter will conclude with a discussion of why subject suppression in Turkish presents a challenge for generative grammar, and the research question.

Turkish is an SOV language, and a neutral transitive sentence looks as in (1):[2][3]

(1) Köpek adam-ı ısır-dı.
dog man-ACC bite-PST
'The dog bit the man.'

It is possible to change the word order in (1) to OSV for information structure purposes:

(2) Adam-ı köpek ısır-dı.
man-ACC dog bite-PST
'The man, the dog bit him.'

[1] Within Turkic, I have confirmed the use of these constructions in Azeri and Uzbek.
[2] Unless stated otherwise, all data is mine.
[3] In the tradition of the syntactic literature on Turkish, I will be presenting Turkish data in the original script instead of IPA. The IPA values of the letters are as follows — word stress is usually on the last syllable: a = /a/; b = /b/; c = /d͡ʒ/; ç = /t͡ʃ/; d = /d/; e = /e/; f = /f/; g = /g/; ğ = /ː/, /‿/, /j/; h = /h/; ı = /ɯ/; i = /i/; j = /ʒ/; k = /k/; l = /l/; m = /m/; n = /n/; o = /o/; ö = /ø/; p = /p/; r = /ɾ/; s = /s/; ş = /ʃ/; t = /t/; u = /u/; ü = /y/; v = /v/; y = /j/; z = /z/.

However, there is another OSV construction, as in (3), which looks just like (2), but yields an indefinite interpretation for the subject. This construction is the first type of subject suppression that will be discussed in this thesis:

(3) Adam-ı köpek ısır-dı.
man-ACC dog bite-PST
'(A dog or dogs) bit the man.'

The subject in (3) is neither singular nor plural. (3) also differs from (2) in that no adverbs are allowed between the subject and the verb:

(4a) Adam-ı köpek **çok çabuk** ısır-dı.
man-ACC dog very quickly bite-PST
'The man, the dog bit him very quickly.'

(4b) *Adam-ı köpek **çok çabuk** ısır-dı.
man-ACC dog very quickly bite-PST
'Intended: (A dog or dogs) bit the man very quickly.'

Next to the OSV subject suppression construction with transitive verbs, there is a corresponding subject suppression construction with intransitive verbs, which requires an NP with oblique case marking preceding the subject.[4] Like the OSV subject suppression construction, the Oblique-NP SV subject suppression construction always yields an indefinite interpretation for the subject, and does not allow adverbs between the subject and the verb. These two constructions will be discussed in section 1.5, before the conclusion.

The first challenge with these subject suppression constructions is to reliably distinguish them from identical word orders like (2), which result from A'-movement. To this end, I will be relying on novel tests that capitalize on specificity as covert partitivity (Enç, 1991), specificity as presupposition (Kelepir, 2001), as well as the facts of relativization in Turkish (Kornfilt, 1997;

[4] I will be using NP pretheoretically in this chapter to refer to all noun phrases, regardless of whether they would be NP or DP in syntax.

Cagri, 2005). These tests will be used to establish whether an external argument is above or below Existential Closure (Heim, 1982), and consequently, whether it has undergone A'-movement.

In order to better explain the subject suppression constructions that will be discussed in section 1.5, the next section will introduce the basics of Turkish argument structure with regard to differential object marking (DOM), definiteness, and *specificity* (Enç, 1991). Section 1.3 will go over the facts of specificity, and introduce the novel diagnostic tests for use in later sections. Section 1.4 will introduce the facts of relativization in Turkish, which are sensitive to subject suppression.

## 1.2 The basics of Turkish argument structure

### 1.2.1 Direct Objects

Turkish has five cases that are morphologically marked, in addition to the nominative with no case morphology. The five cases with distinct case suffixes are the accusative, genitive, dative, locative, and ablative. The language exhibits Differential Object Marking (DOM) by marking the direct object NP for accusative or leaving it without case morphology. The dative, locative, and ablative cases are always marked.

Turkish has an asymmetric article system: There is an indefinite article[5], *bir*, which literally means the numeral 'one,' but there is no definite article.

Since direct objects in Turkish may or may not have accusative marking, and may or may not be modified by the indefinite article, they can be one of the four permutations resulting from ±*bir* and ±ACC. These four permutations correspond to three semantic permutations of ±definite and ±specific (Enç, 1991), since Enç's proposal does not allow the permutation [+definite-specific]

[5] I am referring to *bir* as an 'article' purely descriptively; i.e. this is not a claim about its syntactic category, which is debated in literature (cf. Özyıldız, 2017, p. 869).

— [+definite] is always [+specific]. This correspondence is illustrated in (5). Specificity, which will be discussed further below, can be translated into English with *certain* (Enç, 1991) or *this* (cf. *noteworthiness* in Ionin, 2006) when spoken out-of-the-blue; I will be using 'certain' when translating my data:

(5a) [+definite +specific]
Köpekbalığı **adam-ı** (çiğnemeden) ye-di.
shark **man-ACC** without chewing eat-PST
'The shark ate **the man** (without chewing).'

(5b) [-definite +specific]
Köpekbalığı **bir adam-ı** (çiğnemeden) ye-di.
shark **one man-ACC** without chewing eat-PST
'The shark ate **a certain man** (without chewing).'

(5c) [-definite -specific]
Köpekbalığı **bir adam** (*çiğnemeden) ye-di.
shark **one man** without chewing eat-PST
'The shark ate **a man**.'

(5d) [-definite -specific]
Context: Upon dissecting the stomach of a shark
Köpekbalığı **adam** (*çiğnemeden) ye-miş.
shark **man** without chewing eat-EPST
'The shark has evidently eaten **(a man / men)**.'

(5d) differs from (5c) in the direct object being neither singular nor plural.[6] This quality also makes the direct object in (5d) resistant to adjectival modification.

(5c-d) differ from (5a-b) in not allowing any adverb or adverbial phrase in between the direct object and the verb. In fact, the only free morphemes allowed between the direct object and the verb in (5c-d) are the question particle and focus particles, as shown in (6):

(6a) [-definite -specific]
Köpekbalığı bir adam **mı** ye-di?
shark one man **Q** eat-PST
'Did the shark eat a man?'

[6] Görgülü (2012) proposes that Turkish nouns are 'set nouns' that are singularized via *bir*, though, as acknowledged by Görgülü, it is not clear how definiteness overrides this requirement.

(6b) [-definite -specific]
Köpekbalığı bir adam **da** ye-di.
shark one man **too** eat-PST
'The shark also ate a man.'

Furthermore, the direct object in (5c-d) can never be a proper name or a personal pronoun, which will always have accusative marking. Finally, (5c-d) do not allow binding the direct object to the subject, as in (7):

(7) Köpekbalığı yavru-su-***(nu)** ye-di.
shark offspring-3SG.POSS-**ACC** eat-PST
'The shark ate its own offspring.'

## 1.2.2 Subjects of Transitive Verbs

Unlike direct objects, subjects in Turkish root clauses are never overtly marked for case, meaning there is nothing corresponding to DOM.[7] Instead, subjects offer the option of OSV word order, meaning there are four permutations resulting from ±*bir* and ±OSV, as in (8):

(8a) [+definite +specific]
**Köpekbalığı** adam-ı (çiğnemeden) ye-di.
**shark** man-ACC without chewing eat-PST
'**The shark** ate the man (without chewing).'

(8b) [-definite +specific]
**Bir köpekbalığı** adam-ı (çiğnemeden) ye-di.
**one shark** man-ACC without chewing eat-PST
'**A certain shark** ate the man (without chewing).'

(8c) [-definite -specific]
Adam-ı **bir köpekbalığı** (*çiğnemeden) ye-di.
man-ACC **one shark** without chewing eat-PST
'**A shark** ate the man.'

(8d) [-definite -specific]
Adam-ı **köpekbalığı** (*çiğnemeden) ye-di.
man-ACC **shark** without chewing eat-PST
'**(A shark / sharks)** ate the man.'

[7] Embedded complement clauses do have differential subject marking.

As with the distinction between the direct objects in (5d) and (5c), the subject in (8d) differs from (8c) in being neither singular nor plural, and being resistant to adjectival modification.

(8c-d) represent the first subject suppression construction that will be discussed below. As with the direct objects in (5c-d), (8c-d) allow the insertion of only the question particle and focus particles in between the subject and the verb, as shown in (9):

(9) [-definite -specific]
Adam-ı bir köpekbalığı **mı** ye-di?
man-ACC one shark **Q** eat-PST
'Did a shark eat the man?'

(8c-d) do not allow proper names and personal pronouns as subjects: These only allow the interpretation resulting from A'-movement that we saw in (2), as in (10):

(10) Adam-ı Yelda (çok çabuk) döv-dü.
man-ACC Yelda very quickly beat-PST
'The man, Yelda beat him up (very quickly).'

It is not possible to bind the subject and the object in (8c-d):

(11) Yavru-su*i/j*-nu bir köpekbalığıi ye-di.
offspring-3SG.POSS-ACC one shark eat-PST
'A sharki ate its*i/j* offspring.'

The direct objects in (8c-d) are always marked for the accusative case.

### 1.2.3 Subjects of Intransitive Verbs

Subject NPs of intransitive verbs can neither manifest DOM like direct objects, nor obviously have OSV word order like the subjects of transitive verbs. Instead, we observe that sentences with indefinite nonspecific subjects require the subject to be preceded by an NP in oblique case. (12) illustrates the distribution with an unergative[8] verb:

[8] I am using the Double Causative construction test (Acartürk & Zeyrek, 2010) to distinguish between unaccusative and unergative verbs: the Double Causative is grammatical only with unaccusative verbs.

(12a) [+definite +specific]
**Köpek** (sokak-ta) (ulur gibi) havlı-yor.
**dog** street-LOC like howling bark-PROG
'**The dog** is barking (like howling) (outside).'

(12b) [-definite +specific]
**Bir köpek** (sokak-ta) (ulur gibi) havlı-yor.
**one dog** street-LOC like howling bark-PROG
'**A certain dog** is barking (like howling) (outside).'

(12c) [-definite -specific]
*(Sokak-ta) **bir köpek** (*ulur gibi) havlı-yor.
street-LOC **one dog** like howling bark-PROG
'**A dog** is barking outside.'

(12d) [-definite -specific]
*(Sokak-ta) **köpek** (*ulur gibi) havlı-yor.
street-LOC **dog** like howling bark-PROG
'**(A dog / dogs)** (is / are) barking outside.'

(13) exemplifies the distribution with an unaccusative verb:

(13a) [+definite +specific]
**Uçak** (pist-ten) (yalpalayarak) kalk-tı.
**plane** runway-ABL unsteadily take off-PST
'**The plane** took off (unsteadily) (from the runway).'

(13b) [-definite +specific]
**Bir uçak** (pist-ten) (yalpalayarak) kalk-tı.
**one plane** runway-ABL unsteadily take off-PST
'**A certain plane** took off (unsteadily) (from the runway).'

(13c) [-definite -specific]
*(Pist-ten) **bir uçak** (*yalpalayarak) kalk-tı.
runway-ABL **one plane** unsteadily take off-PST
'**A plane** took off from the runway.'

(13d) [-definite -specific]
*(Pist-ten) **uçak** (*yalpalayarak) kalk-tı.
runway-ABL **plane** unsteadily take off-PST
'(**A plane / planes)** took off from the runway.'

As with the distinction between the direct objects in (5d) and (5c) and the subjects in (8d) and (8c), the subjects in (12-13d) differ from (12-13c) in being neither singular or plural, and being resistant to adjectival modification.

(12c-d) and (13c-d) represent the second subject suppression construction that will be discussed below. As with the direct objects in (5c-d) and the subjects in (8c-d), (12c-d) and (13c-d) allow the insertion of only the question particle and focus particles in between the subject and the verb. (12c-d) and (13c-d) do not allow proper names and personal pronouns as subjects, and it is not possible to bind the subject and the oblique NP, as shown in (14b):[9]

(14a) Bir köpekbalığı$_{i}$ yavru-su$_{i/j}$-na saldır-dı.
one shark offspring-3SG.POSS-DAT attack-PST
'A certain shark$_{i}$ attacked its$_{i/j}$ offspring.'

(14b) Yavru-su$_{*i/j}$-na bir köpekbalığı$_{i}$ saldır-dı.
offspring-3SG.POSS-DAT one shark attack-PST
'A shark$_{i}$ attacked its$_{*i/j}$ offspring.'

[9] The reason the patient of 'attack' takes dative instead of accusative case is probably due to the fact that the verb is etymologically composed of an archaic root and the causative suffix.

### 1.2.4 Turkish argument structure: A summary

The pattern in 1.2.1-3 is summarized in table (15):

(15)

| Distribution / Interpretation | Definite or Specific | Definite or Specific | Definite or Specific | Indefinite Nonspecific | Indefinite Nonspecific | Indefinite Nonspecific |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Verb | Transitive | Transitive | Intransitive | Transitive | Transitive | Intransitive |
| Argument | Object | Subject | Subject | Object | Subject | Subject |
| Accusative Marking | **YES** | No | No | No | No | No |
| Allows intervening Adverbs | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | No | No |
| Proper Name / Personal Pronoun / Can Bind | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | No | No |
| OSV word order | No | No | No | No | **YES** | No |
| Preceded by Oblique NP | No | No | No | No | No | **YES** |

As we can observe from (15), OSV word order with transitive verbs and the oblique NP preceding the subject with intransitive verbs functionally correspond to DOM as differential subject marking.

Another crucial observation from (15) is that a Turkish transitive sentence can have at most one nonspecific argument,[10] which can also be stated as a transitive sentence must have at least one definite or specific argument. This is because a nonspecific argument has to immediately precede the verb, so it can either be the object or the subject. Thus, it is not possible in Turkish to say 'A dog bit a man,' where both the dog and the man are nonspecific. It would be necessary to introduce one of the arguments in the preceding sentence, as in 'I saw a man. A dog bit him.'

[10] This fact is not changed by ditransitives, since oblique NPs – including datives – are always definite or specific, though they can be weak definites. See Section 2.2.

The next section will go over the facts of specificity in Turkish in order to introduce novel diagnostic tests that will be used when looking at the subject suppression constructions closely in section 1.5.

# 1.3 Specificity in Turkish

## 1.3.1 Enç (1991): Specificity as Partitivity

In her seminal paper on the semantics of specificity, Enç describes two environments where indefinites in Turkish will always be specific. One environment involves universal quantification, which does not serve as a readily applicable diagnostic test for specific objects and subjects. The second environment is the use of specific indefinites as partitives, which is very easy to test for by having a sentence with an indefinite object or subject follow a sentence where a set of the indefinite object or subject was made salient. The application of this test is shown in (16) for objects and (17) for subjects:

(16) Context: Following the sentence: “There were three men swimming in the sea when a shark showed up."

(16a) [-definite +specific]
Köpekbalığı **bir adam-ı** ye-di.
shark **one man-ACC** eat-PST
‘The shark ate **one of the men**.’

(16b) [-definite -specific]
#Köpekbalığı **bir adam** ye-di.
shark **one man** eat-PST
‘The shark ate **a man**.’

(17) Context: Following the sentence: “The man was swimming in the sea when three sharks showed up."

(17a) [-definite +specific]
**Bir köpekbalığı** adam-ı ye-di.
**one shark** man-ACC eat-PST
‘**One of the sharks** ate the man.’

(17b) [-definite -specific]
#Adam-ı **bir** **köpekbalığı** ye-di.
man-ACC **one** **shark** eat-PST
'**A shark** ate the man.'

As can be seen in (16-17a), making salient a set of the specific indefinite object or subject before the sentence yields a partitive interpretation. Moreover, (16-17b) show that using a nonspecific indefinite in such a context is not felicitous, since it is interpreted as introducing a new entity that is not a member of the set that has already been made salient.

I will be using partitivity as a diagnostic test to detect specific subjects as in (17a) in OSV and Oblique-NP VS word order sentences, where the object or the oblique-NP has undergone A'-movement. This will help distinguish such sentences from subject suppression constructions.

### 1.3.2 Kelepir (2001): Specificity as Presupposition

Kelepir provides a range of contexts where specific indefinites can be used out-of-the-blue,[11] that is, without making their membership in a set salient. In such contexts, specific indefinite NPs are interpreted as *presuppositional*. The presuppositional use of specific indefinites can be used as a diagnostic test via negation: Since presuppositions survive under negation, negating sentences with specific indefinite NPs does not negate the existence of these NPs. For this reason, negated sentences with specific indefinite NPs are not felicitous if they are followed by a sentence declaring the non-existence of these NPs, as shown in (18) and (19) for objects and subjects:

(18) Context: Followed by the sentence: "There was no one in the sea."

(18a) [-definite +specific]
#Köpekbalığı **bir** **adam-ı** ye-**me**-di.
shark **one** **man-ACC** eat-**NEG**-PST
'The shark did **not** eat **a certain man**.'

[11] Kelepir's analysis is confined to objects.

(18b) [-definite -specific]
Köpekbalığı **bir adam** ye-**me**-di.
shark **one man** eat-**NEG**-PST
'The shark did **not** eat **a man**.'

(19) Context: Followed by the sentence: "Sharks do not live in these waters."

(19a) [-definite +specific]
#**Bir köpekbalığı** adam-ı ye-**me**-di.
**one shark** man-ACC eat-**NEG**-PST
'**A certain shark** did **not** eat the man.'

(19b) [-definite -specific]
Adam-ı **bir köpekbalığı** ye-**me**-di.
man-ACC **one shark** eat-**NEG**-PST
'**A shark** did **not** eat the man.'

In (19), the sentence following the negated sentence could also state substitution rather than declaring non-existence, such as: "An orca ate the man." Substitution is less straightforward for (18): Stating "The shark ate a woman" or "The shark ate a child" sounds much better with accusative marking on 'woman' or 'child,' i.e. if they are specific indefinite objects, which in turn makes 'man' in the preceding sentence with accusative marking acceptable. Presumably, 'man' can be used as a default for 'human being,'[12] but if the gender or age of the victim is known, this already makes the victim specific. In such a context, the negation of the preceding sentence with a presupposed object would be acceptable since the existence of the object as a 'victim' is not negated. This line of thinking is supported by the fact that it is acceptable to state substitution by following with a sentence like: "The shark ate a seal."

I will be using presupposition and negation to set up minimal pairs between A'-movement constructions and subject suppression constructions, where only the latter can be felicitously negated since their subjects are nonspecific.

[12] e.g. 'maneater'

The next section will introduce the facts of relativization in Turkish, which are sensitive to subject suppression, and will also be used as diagnostic tests in section 1.5.

## 1.4 Relativization in Turkish

Relative clauses in Turkish are always participial.[13] All NPs in a sentence can be relativized. The language morphologically distinguishes between two types of relativization (Kornfilt, 1997; Cagri, 2005): Subject relativization, and non-subject relativization (i.e. all else).[14] (20) exemplifies both types of relativization:

(20) Köpek adam-ı ısır-dı.
dog man-ACC bite-PST
'The dog bit the man.'

(20a) Subject Relativization
adam-ı ısır-**an** köpek
man-ACC bite-**REL** dog
'the dog that (bit / is biting) the man'

(20b) Object Relativization (exemplifies all non-subject relativization)
köpeğ-**in** ısır-**dığ-ı** adam
dog-**GEN** bite-**REL-3SG.POSS** man
'the man whom the dog (bit / is biting)'

Subject relativization clauses are formed with the -An suffix, whereas non-subject relativization uses the -DIK suffix, and also marks the subject with genitive case and the corresponding agreement suffix following the relativizing suffix. Even though the original sentence in (20) was in the past tense, the relative clauses have been translated as alternatively past or present tense, since relativization in Turkish does not distinguish between past and present: The tense needs to be inferred pragmatically.[15]

[13] The exception is an archaic construction that used the *ki* complementizer borrowed from Persian as a wh-word.
[14] While the relativization facts in this section are discussed by Kornfilt and Cagri, the minimal pair in (26) is my original observation.
[15] Relativization in Turkish does morphologically indicate the future, regardless of if one considers the future a tense or a mood.

The relativization facts, along with the specificity tests, will be used in the next section to show that the subject suppression constructions are genuinely distinct from constructions with the same word orders resulting from A'-movement. Relativization, in particular, ignores A'-movement, and chooses between the two morphological options in (20a) and (20b) based on the word order before A'-movement, whereas the direct objects and oblique-NPs in subject suppression constructions are relativized as if they were subjects.

## 1.5 Subject Suppression in Turkish

### 1.5.1 OSV Subject Suppression

The OSV word order subject suppression construction is interpreted like a passive, even though the verb does not have the passive suffix, and the object is marked for the accusative.[16] As we saw in (1) and (3), repeated below, suppressed subjects are interpreted as nonspecific indefinites, and feel more like predicates than arguments:

(1) Köpek adam-ı ısır-dı.
dog man-ACC bite-PST
'The dog bit the man.'

(3) Adam-ı köpek ısır-dı.
man-ACC dog bite-PST
'(A dog or dogs) bit the man.'

In spite of the distinct semantic interpretation, however, the subject suppression construction needs to be inspected more closely, since the same word order can be obtained for information structure purposes, as in the topicalization in (21):

(21) Context: A man and a woman enter a room, where there is a dog and a fox. The dog bites the man, and the fox bites the woman.
[+definite +specific]
Adam-ı köpek ısır-dı.
man-ACC dog bite-PST
'The man, the dog bit him.'

[16] Öztürk (2005) translates sentences with this construction into English as passives.

When we compare (21) to the sentence with subject suppression in (22), we see that the subject in (21) can be modified freely, and "adverbs that are oriented towards agentive external arguments" (Öztürk, 2005) are allowed in between the subject and the verb:[17]

(21) Context: A man and a woman enter a room, where there is a dog and a fox. The dog bites the man, and the fox bites the woman.
[+definite +specific]
Adam-ı (korkunç) köpek (acıtmadan[18]) ısır-dı.
man-ACC terrible dog painlessly bite-PST
'The man, the (terrible) dog (painlessly) bit him.'

(22) [-definite -specific]
Adam-ı (*korkunç) köpek (*acıtmadan) ısır-dı.
man-ACC terrible dog painlessly bite-PST
'(A dog / dogs) bit the man.'

Furthermore, the subject in (21) can be a proper name or a personal pronoun, as we saw in (10), repeated below; this is not acceptable in (22) and indeed serves as a distinguishing diagnostic on its own:

(10) Adam-ı Yelda (çok çabuk) döv-dü.
man-ACC Yelda very quickly beat-PST
'The man, Yelda beat him up (very quickly).'

We had previously seen that binding the subject and the object was not possible in a sentence like (22), but binding is possible in (21), as shown in (23):

(23) Context: In response to the question: "Was it the dog or the fox that bit its owner?"
[+definite +specific]
Sahib-**i**-ni köpek ısır-dı.
owner-**3SG.POSS**-ACC dog bite-PST
'Its owner, the dog bit.'

[17] While the intervention facts are true for all adverbs, "adverbs that are oriented towards agentive external arguments," as noted by Öztürk, are a more accurate diagnostic since they are in complementary distribution with suppressed subjects.
[18] This is a participial adverb that literally means 'without hurting.'

We can also differentiate (21) and (22) through relativization. (24) and (25) are relative clauses based respectively on (21) and (22), headed by ‘man’:

(24) köpeğ-**in** ısır-**dığ-ı** adam
dog-**GEN** bite-**REL-3SG.POSS** man
‘the man whom the dog bit’

(25) köpek ısır-**an** adam
dog bite-**REL** man
‘the man whom (a dog / dogs) bit’

(24) shows that ‘man’ is relativized like an object, and the same way it would be relativized before A’-movement in (21). In (25), however, ‘man’ is relativized like a subject, as if it was the man doing the biting. Indeed, (25), on its own, is ambiguous as a relative clause derived from the two sentences in (26), where ‘dog’ in (26b) is an indefinite nonspecific object that is neither singular nor plural:

(26a) Adam-ı köpek ısır-dı.
man-ACC dog bite-PST
‘(A dog / dogs) bit the man.’

(26b) Adam köpek ısır-dı.
man dog bite-PST
‘The man bit (a dog / dogs).’

In return, the suppressed subjects of OSV sentences, such as ‘dog’ in (22), cannot head a relative clause at all: This is a principal exception to the previous statement that all NPs in a sentence can be relativized in Turkish.

While it is easy to demonstrate that a sentence with a definite subject where the object has been scrambled before the subject versus OSV subject suppression with a subject that is neither singular nor plural are different grammatical constructions, delineating the difference when the subjects of both constructions are modified by *bir*, i.e. where the A’-movement construction has a specific indefinite subject and OSV subject suppression has a singular subject, is challenging even

for speakers of the language. This is because when both subjects are indefinites and also modified by the indefinite article, they can only be distinguished through specificity. We can now resort to the novel diagnostic tests presented in Section 1.3. First, we rely on partitivity to create an OSV sentence with a specific subject, as in (27), since partitivity makes it very easy to distinguish specific subjects:

(27) Context: A man and a woman enter a room, where there are three dogs. One dog painlessly bites the man, and two dogs painfully bite the woman.
[-definite +specific]
Adam-ı bir köpek acıtmadan ısır-dı.
man-ACC one dog painlessly bite-PST
'The man, one of the dogs painlessly bit him.'

When we compare (27) to the OSV subject suppression example in (28), we see that the prohibition of 'adverbs that are oriented towards agentive external arguments' is still a distinguishing criterion:

(28) [-definite -specific]
Adam-ı bir köpek (*acıtmadan) ısır-dı.
man-ACC one dog painlessly bite-PST
'A dog bit the man.'

We can now test for presupposition by negating both sentences and checking if they can be felicitously followed by a sentence that declares there were no dogs in the room:

(29) Context: Followed by the sentence: "There were no dogs in the room."

(29a) [-definite +specific]
#Adam-ı bir köpek acıtmadan ısır-ma-dı.
man-ACC one dog painlessly bite-NEG-PST
'The man, a certain dog did not painlessly bite him.'

(29b) [-definite -specific]
Adam-ı bir köpek ısır-ma-dı.
man-ACC one dog bite-NEG-PST
'A dog did not bite the man.'

(29a) creates a common ground contradiction with the sentence that it is supposed to precede, since it affirms the existence of a dog, even if the dog did not bite the man.

Relativization is not a reliable test for distinguishing between (27) and (28) since when a relative clause is being derived from (28), the nonspecific subject, which has already been introduced, is promoted to specific, and there is an inclination to relativize the same way as (27). In a sentence like (22), the subject not being singular or plural prevents its promotion to specific.

### 1.5.2 Oblique-NP SV Subject Suppression

The second subject suppression construction, where in lieu of the direct object there is an NP in an oblique case preceding the subject, shares with the OSV construction a passive-like interpretation, even though the oblique NP construction obviously cannot be a passive since it is formed with intransitive verbs. Akin to how the object in the OSV subject suppression construction can be dropped if it has been established as the discourse topic, the oblique NP can be omitted if pragmatically licensed. For example, (12d) and (13d), repeated below, could be uttered without the oblique NPs in response to the question: "What is that sound?"

(12d) [-definite -specific]
*(Sokak-ta) **köpek** (*ulur gibi) havlı-yor.
street-LOC **dog** like howling bark-PROG
'**(A dog / dogs)** (is / are) barking outside.'

(13d) [-definite -specific]
*(Pist-ten) **uçak** (*yalpalayarak) kalk-tı.
runway-ABL **plane** unsteadily take off-PST
'(**A plane / planes)** took off from the runway.'

As with OSV subject suppression, it is necessary to delineate the oblique NP construction from sentences with the same word order that are formed through A'-movement; the two are compared in (30):

(30a) Context: The dog is barking in the garden, and the cat is meowing on the sofa.
[+definite +specific]
Bahçe-de (aptal) köpek (durmadan) havlı-yor.
garden-LOC stupid dog non-stop bark-PROG
'In the garden, the (stupid) dog is barking (non-stop).'

(30b) [-definite -specific]
Bahçe-de (*aptal) köpek (*durmadan) havlı-yor.
garden-LOC stupid dog non-stop bark-PROG
‘(A dog / dogs) are barking in the garden.’

The sentence in (30a) that is formed through A’-movement allows adjectival modification of the subject and allows ‘adverbs that are oriented towards agentive external arguments.’ The subject in this construction can be a proper name or personal pronoun, which are not allowed in (30b). The construction in (30a) can also bind the oblique NP to the subject, as in (31):

(31) Context: In response to the question: “Was it the dog or the cat that ran away from its owner?”
[+definite +specific]
Sahib-**in**-den köpek kaç-tı.
owner-**3SG.POSS**-ABL dog flee-PST
‘From its owner, the dog ran away.’

When we relativize ‘garden’ in (30), (30a) shows non-subject morphology, but (30b) uses subject morphology for the oblique NP:

(32a) köpeğ-**in** havla-**dığ-ı** bahçe
dog-**GEN** bark-**REL-3SG.POSS** garden
‘the garden where the dog is barking’

(32b) köpek havla-**yan** bahçe
dog bark-**REL** garden
‘the garden where (a dog / dogs) (is / are) barking’

The suppressed subject in (30b) cannot head a relative clause.

Delineating sentences formed through A’-movement from oblique NP subject suppression is again made difficult when subjects are modified by *bir*, so that we are comparing Oblique-NP SV sentences with specific indefinite subjects to suppressed subjects that are nonspecific but are singular: The subjects in these two constructions can only be distinguished through specificity, for which we resort to the tests from Section 1.3. We first rely on partitivity to form an A’-movement sentence with a specific subject, since partitivity makes specific subjects easy to distinguish:

(33) Context: I have three dogs in my garden, but only one of them is barking non-stop.
[-definite +specific]
Bahçe-de bir köpek durmadan havlı-yor.
garden-LOC one dog non-stop bark-PROG
'In the garden, one of the dogs is barking non-stop.'

The corresponding sentence with subject suppression in (34) does not allow 'adverbs that are oriented towards agentive external arguments:'

(34) [-definite -specific]
Bahçe-de bir köpek (*durmadan) havlı-yor.
garden-LOC one dog non-stop bark-PROG
'A dog is barking in the garden.'

When we negate (33) and (34) and have them precede a sentence that declares "There are no dogs in the garden," (33) makes no sense since the existence of a dog in the garden is presupposed:

(35) Context: Preceding the sentence: "There are no dogs in the garden."

(35a) [-definite +specific]
#Bahçe-de bir köpek durmadan havla-mı-yor.
garden-LOC one dog non-stop bark-NEG-PROG
'In the garden, a certain dog is not barking non-stop.'

(35b) [-definite -specific]
Bahçe-de bir köpek havla-mı-yor.
garden-LOC one dog bark-NEG-PROG
'A dog is not barking in the garden.'

Relativization is not a reliable test for distinguishing A'-movement from subject suppression when the subject is modified by *bir* for the same reason as for OSV subject suppression: When forming a relative clause from the sentence with subject suppression, the nonspecific subject is promoted to specific.

## 1.6 Conclusion

This chapter has shown that the two subject suppression constructions in Turkish with transitive and intransitive verbs are distinct from A'-movement, leading to the conclusion that they must have distinct syntactic structures. I will review existing proposals for these structures in Chapter

2, but will summarize them here in order to discuss why subject suppression in Turkish presents a challenge for generative grammar.

Kornfilt (2003) proposes a head-incorporation analysis for the subjects in subject suppression constructions, while Öztürk (2005) proposes pseudo-noun incorporation. Aside from the empirical shortcomings of these proposals, they also go against the established theoretical view that subjects cannot be incorporated. As originally proposed by Baker (1988), noun incorporation cannot be available for subjects since the trace of a subject cannot be properly governed by the verb that the subject is incorporating into, thereby violating the Empty Category Principle (ECP). Even with the broader potential for incorporation as phrasal noun incorporation that is proposed by Barrie and Mathieu (2016), the authors are in full agreement with Baker that agents cannot undergo incorporation (p. 36). Notably, in her review of literature on noun incorporation, Johns (2017, p. 18) cites only one proposal for subject incorporation where subjects are not restricted to non-agentive and/or inanimate.

The other existing proposal that accounts for subject suppression is by Arslan-Kechriotis (2009), who proposes adding a new Last Resort rule to Universal Grammar (UG).

Given the unorthodox nature of existing proposals on subject suppression constructions in Turkish, the research question can be formulated as: What kind of syntactic structure can account for the subject suppression constructions with the least deviation from established cross-linguistic proposals?

In Chapter 3, I will propose that the external arguments in the subject suppression constructions are merged in the specifier of VP, and semantically interpreted via a special composition rule, as per Kratzer (1996).

# Chapter 2

# Literature Review

## 2.1 Introduction

The literature review will cover the three proposals that have been presented to account for the facts of subject suppression in Turkish: Noun Incorporation (Kornfilt, 2003), Pseudo-Noun Incorporation (Öztürk, 2005), and an additional Last Resort rule for Universal Grammar (UG) called *Adhesion* (Arslan-Kechriotis, 2009). I will summarize each proposal and critically evaluate it. It should be noted that none of these proposals are focused on subject suppression, but include the topic tangentially; to the best of my knowledge, my thesis is the first direct analysis of subject suppression in Turkish in generative grammar.

## 2.2 Kornfilt (2003): Noun Incorporation

Kornfilt's proposal for subject suppression is based on the facts of scrambling adjective phrases and PPs out of DPs to a postverbal position, which she calls 'subscrambling.' Crucially, Kornfilt assumes that (p. 129) "non-definite oblique DPs are systematically ambiguous between specific and non-specific readings," which she backs with two examples, one involving a plural oblique DP,[19] and the other shown in (36):[20]

(36) Ahmet dün akşam *sinema-ya* git-ti.
Ahmet yesterday evening cinema-DAT go-PST
'Ahmet went to the cinema [+ or -specific] yesterday evening.' (Preferred: [-specific])

[19] I am avoiding discussing plural noun phrases since Turkish plurals have characteristics that call for further research – see Görgülü (2012).

[20] The IPA values of the letters are as follows — word stress is usually on the last syllable: a = /a/; b = /b/; c = /d͡ʒ/; ç = /t͡ʃ/; d = /d/; e = /e/; f = /f/; g = /ɡ/; ğ = /ː/, /‿/, /j/; h = /h/; ı = /ɯ/; i = /i/; j = /ʒ/; k = /k/; l = /l/; m = /m/; n = /n/; o = /o/; ö = /ø/; p = /p/; r = /ɾ/; s = /s/; ş = /ʃ/; t = /t/; u = /u/; ü = /y/; v = /v/; y = /j/; z = /z/.

There are two immediate problems with (36). First, 'cinema' cannot alternate between specific and non-specific readings, as it is not modified by the indefinite article *bir*: At least one reading of 'cinema' has to be the definite 'the cinema.' Second, there is no a priori reason to prefer the nonspecific reading without context: If Ahmet is an owner of a certain cinema, the definite reading would be preferred. In addition to these two points, it is not clear why oblique DPs should be ambiguous between specific and nonspecific, when the ambiguity in question can be readily reframed as an ambiguity between definite and weak definite readings. For oblique DPs that are modified by the indefinite article, we can employ the presupposition test from Chapter 1 to see if both specific and nonspecific readings are possible:

(37) Ahmet dün akşam bir sinema-ya git-me-di.
Ahmet yesterday evening one cinema-DAT go-NEG-PST
'Ahmet did not go to a cinema yesterday evening.'

cannot be felicitously followed by the sentence "The Taliban shut down all cinemas."[21]

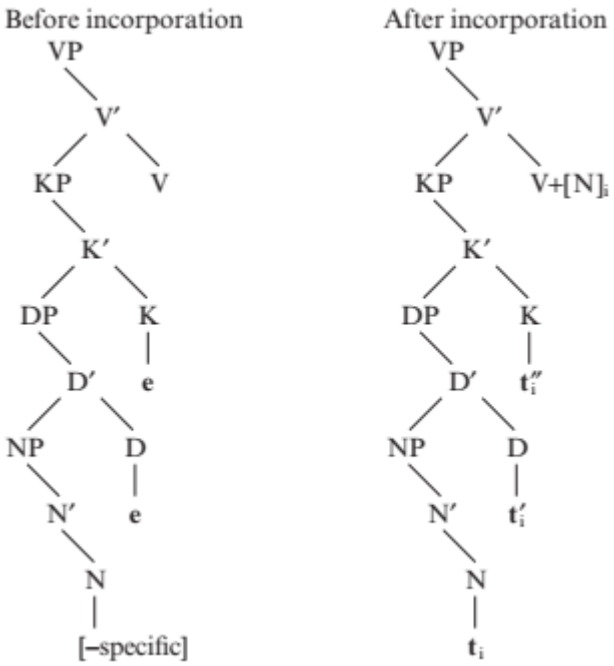
Thus, we see that oblique noun phrases modified by the indefinite article are specific since they survive under negation, indicating that they are presuppositional. As for oblique noun phrases without the indefinite article, weak definites capture the reading that Kornfilt considers nonspecific. The argument that oblique noun phrases are always definite or specific will be relevant in Section 3.4.

Kornfilt proceeds to show that subscrambling is only possible out of nonspecific objects and subjects, and that subscrambling is not possible out of any noun phrase with morphological case marking, as well as specific subjects. Since she considers oblique DPs as ambiguous between specific and nonspecific, the subscrambling facts make Kornfilt focus on case marking, as opposed to specificity, as a barrier to extraction. She thus proposes that DPs are embedded within Case

[21] A felicitous sentence that could follow (37) is: "The place where he saw the film is an exclusive club for film noir enthusiasts."

Phrases (KPs). In the case of nonspecific objects, which are not marked for the accusative, the K head is phonologically empty, which allows the N head to move into its position, and further incorporate into the V. Kornfilt illustrates the proposal as in (38) (p. 143):

(38)




While she acknowledges Baker's (1988) argument that subject incorporation should be impossible, Kornfilt nonetheless argues that Turkish nonspecific subjects incorporate like nonspecific objects, which explains why subscrambling is possible out of nonspecific subjects.

Kornfilt then proceeds to dismiss potential counterarguments against her proposal. One counterargument against noun incorporation would be the fact that the question particle and focus particles can appear in-between nonspecific subjects / objects and verbs. Kornfilt responds by noting that these particles can also appear in-between verbal suffixes, meaning they are not a test for syntactic constituency. She backs her response with three examples, one of which is hard to refute. There are, however, problems with the other two examples. Thus, (39) is an example Kornfilt uses to argue that the question particle can appear in-between verbal suffixes:

(39) Hasan iş-e git-me-miş-*mi*-y-di?
Hasan work-DAT go-NEG-EPST-Q-COP-PST
'Hadn't Hasan gone to work?'

However, the copular suffix in (39) was historically a full verb, 'imek' (Csató & Johanson, 1998); a more literal translation of the sentence is 'Was it not that Hasan had gone to work?' Therefore, there may well be two verbs in (39): 'go' and the copular verb, with the question particle appearing between these two syntactic constituents.[22]

The third example that Kornfilt uses to argue that the question particle and focus particles do not indicate syntactic constituency is an example where a focus particle appears between a light verb and the noun that it is verbalizing, as in (40):

(40) Hasan *dua* *bile* *et*-ti.
Hasan prayer even do-PST
'Hasan even prayed.'

Since more current analyses propose a complex structure for light verb constructions, (40) cannot support the argument that the focus particle does not observe syntactic constituency.

Other than the question and focus particles, another potential counterargument against incorporation that Kornfilt needs to dismiss is case assignment in causative constructions. As seen in her examples in (41), the causee of an intransitive verb is assigned accusative case, whereas the causee of a transitive verb is assigned dative case:

(41a) Hasan Ali-*yi* koş-tur-du.
Hasan Ali-ACC run-CAUS-PST
'Hasan made Ali run.'

(41b) Hasan Ali-*ye* kutu-yu aç-tır-dı.
Hasan Ali-DAT box-ACC open-CAUS-PST
'Hasan made Ali open the box.'

[22] I am aware that this diachronic counterargument would need to be backed by a study of the synchronic facts with the copular suffix.

If non-specific objects are incorporated into the verb, we would expect the verb to behave like an intransitive with the causative construction, and assign accusative case to the causee. This is not borne out:

(42a) Hasan Ali-*ye* kutu aç-tır-dı.
Hasan Ali-DAT box open-CAUS-PST
'Hasan made Ali open boxes [-specific].'

(42b) *Hasan Ali-*yi* kutu aç-tır-dı.
Hasan Ali-DAT box open-CAUS-PST
'Hasan made Ali open boxes [-specific].'

Kornfilt counters this by showing that the same holds true for causative constructions with light verbs as well:

(43a) Hasan Ali-*ye* dua et-tir-di.
Hasan Ali-DAT prayer do-CAUS-PST
'Hasan made Ali pray.'

(43b) *Hasan Ali-*yi* dua et-tir-di.
Hasan Ali-ACC prayer do-CAUS-PST
'Hasan made Ali pray.'

In Kornfilt's own words (p. 149):

> Whatever the correct characterization of the Case array in causatives, what is important for our purposes is the fact that even lexical units like *dua et* "pray" are treated in causatives as though they were transitives. Therefore, the fact that sequences consisting of 'bare' objects and main verbs are also treated like transitives in causatives is not problematic for my analysis of those sequences as incorporation structures.

As with Kornfilt's previous reliance on light verbs in (40), her argument here does not hold in the face of more current analyses of light verbs: 'Prayer do' cannot be taken as a lexical unit that is the same as an intransitive verb.

Finally, Kornfilt presents two additional arguments in favour of incorporation, both of which were discussed in Chapter 1. The first is the fact that only the object or the subject can be nonspecific, but not both. While this could, indeed, be explained through incorporation, it can also

be explained through an Extended Projection Principle (EPP) on a higher head. The second argument is that nonspecific arguments cannot bind anaphors. Again, while incorporation could explain this fact, it may also be an extension of the fact that nonspecific arguments cannot be proper names or personal pronouns.

In summary, Kornfilt's proposal for nonspecific subjects is – as acknowledged by her – contra Baker (1988), raising the question of how the incorporated subject can properly govern its trace, which in turn is necessary for the Empty Category Principle (ECP). Furthermore, her examples with light verbs are no longer valid with more current analyses that treat light verb constructions as having complex structures, and the single nonspecific argument limit with the binding facts can have alternative explanations.

## 2.3 Öztürk (2005): Pseudo-Noun Incorporation

Öztürk's proposal for nonspecific subjects is part of a much broader crosslinguistic proposal relating the presence or absence of certain functional categories in a given language to how the language establishes argumenthood. She starts by noting that the theoretical literature has independently evolved two sets of functional categories for establishing argumenthood, one being the D head for assigning referentiality, the other set being the T and v heads for checking Case. Öztürk then proposes that languages may parametrically differ in terms of how they distribute the workload of assigning referentiality and checking Case between functional categories. To this end, she classifies languages into four types based on the morphology associated with Case and referentiality: 1. Languages with both articles and case morphology, e.g. Hungarian 2. Languages with case morphology but without articles, e.g. Turkish[23] 3. Languages with articles but without case morphology, e.g. English 4. Languages with neither case morphology nor articles, e.g.

[23] Öztürk considers the Turkish indefinite article *bir*, meaning 'one,' to be a numeral.

Chinese. For Turkish, Öztürk proposes that the language lacks the DP projection, and that referentiality is instead assigned by Case. Furthermore, since the same functional heads that assign referentiality also check Case, there is no need in Turkish to establish an Agree relationship with higher functional projections to check Case: Case in Turkish is checked in situ, in theta positions. Öztürk further argues that there is no syntactic motivation in Turkish for the vP projection, and that the only relevant functional category in Turkish for Case and referentiality is TP, which plays a role in the morphological realization of Case.

After an overview of the counterarguments to the analysis of nonspecific objects and subjects as noun incorporation, Öztürk proposes to analyse them as pseudo-noun incorporation, where the incorporated elements are NPs that lack argumenthood. With regard to nonspecific subjects, she argues that the ungrammaticality of passivizing the object of a transitive verb with a nonspecific subject patterns with the subject of an unaccusative verb, and shows that the subjects in both cases are not external arguments:

(44a) Ali-yi arı sok-tu.
Ali-ACC bee sting-PST
'Ali got bee stung.'

(44b) *Ali sok-ul-du.
Ali sting-PASS-PST
'Ali was bee stung.'

(45a) Arı Ali-yi sok-tu.
bee Ali-ACC sting-PST
'The bee stung Ali.'

(45b) Ali (bu) arı tarafından sok-ul-du.
Ali this bee by sting-PASS-PST
'Ali was stung by (this) the bee.'

(46a) Çocuk büyü-dü.
child grow-PST
'The child grew up.'

(46b) *Çocuk büyü-n-dü.
child grow-PASS-PST
'The child was grown up.'

Further evidence that nonspecific subjects are not external arguments comes from the fact that they cannot control PRO:

(47a) Polis$_i$ Ali-yi [PRO$_i$ sorgula-mak için] tutukla-dı.
police Ali-ACC interrogate-INF for arrest-PST
'The police arrested Ali to interrogate him.'

(47b) *Ali-yi [PRO$_i$ sorgula-mak için] polis$_i$ tutukla-dı.
Ali-ACC interrogate-INF for police arrest-PST
'Police-arresting happened to Ali to interrogate him.'

A final fact showing that nonspecific subjects are not external arguments is the ungrammaticality of such sentences with adverbs that are oriented towards agentive external arguments, as in (48):

(48a) Polis Ali-yi kasıtlı olarak tutukla-dı.
police Ali-ACC intentional being arrest-PST
'The police arrested Ali intentionally.'

(48b) *Ali-yi kasıtlı olarak polis tutukla-dı.
Ali-ACC intentional being police arrest-PST
'Police-arresting happened to Ali intentionally.'

Though Öztürk's examples for arguing that nonspecific subjects are not external arguments are convincing and I will be adopting them for my own proposal, her pseudo-noun incorporation analysis is part of an unorthodox crosslinguistic theoretical proposal whose critical appraisal exceeds my academic preparation. However, we will see in Chapter 3 that Turkish is compatible with a conventional account where subjects check their Case at T and trigger phi-agreement, contra Öztürk.

## 2.4 Arslan-Kechriotis (2009): Adhesion

Arslan-Kechriotis discusses nonspecific subjects in the context of her broader proposal to motivate movement above Existential Closure in Turkish solely by Case checking, since she considers the

availability of both Case checking and EPP a redundancy. Furthermore, unlike Kornfilt and Öztürk, Arslan-Kechriotis distinguishes between nonspecific bare noun subjects, which she considers NPs, and nonspecific subjects modified by *bir*, which she considers DPs. Her proposal that will be summarized below applies to NPs; for nonspecific DPs, she proposes that they have 'covert' strong Case with a [-specific] feature that stops them from moving above Existential Closure. The problem with the latter proposal is that while it accounts for nonspecific DP objects, it cannot explain how nonspecific DP subjects, which in Arslan-Kechriotis's proposal still need to check their Case at T, remain below Existential Closure with a strong Case feature. I will therefore treat the proposal for NP subjects as extending to all nonspecific subjects.[24]

Arslan-Kechriotis presents the following counterarguments against the analysis of nonspecific subjects as noun incorporation: 1. Nonspecific subjects can be modified by adjectives.[25] 2. Nonspecific subjects can be coordinated. 3. Nonspecific subjects can be followed by the question or focus particles before the verb. Arslan-Kechriotis also counters Öztürk's pseudo-noun incorporation proposal by noting that in the absence of a DP projection, whether an NP will incorporate into the verb or not has to be resolved pre-syntactically. Arslan-Kechriotis's own proposal is a new Last Resort rule that she labels 'Adhesion' (p. 100):

(49) *Adhesion*
An argument NP adheres to $V^0$ as Last Resort.

[24] This is purely for the purpose of reviewing all proposals for subject suppression - Arslan-Kechriotis does need to syntactically distinguish between nonspecific subjects with and without *bir* due to other parts of her broader proposal.
[25] Granted, the two examples that Arslan-Kechriotis uses, "green apple' and "rabid dog," could also be compound nouns in Turkish. As stated in Chapter 1, nonspecific subjects and objects are very resistant to adjectival modification if not modified by *bir*.

If the subject adheres to the verb, the object has to raise above the subject since, as per the *subject-in-situ generalization* (Alexiadou & Anagnostopoulou, 2001), by spell-out VP can contain no more than one argument with an unchecked Case feature.

Leaving aside the tension in Arslan-Kechriotis's proposal with covert strong Case, Adhesion itself is problematic since it is a purely descriptive account. Furthermore, if Adhesion is available to Universal Grammar (UG), why is it not more common crosslinguistically?

## 2.5 Conclusion

Having reviewed the three proposals by Kornfilt, (2003), Öztürk (2005), and Arslan-Kechriotis, (2009) that could account for subject suppression, we are left with a choice between a proposal that poorly fits the data, a proposal that requires major adjustments to syntactic theory, and a proposal that offers a description which is nonetheless one more rule to be added to UG. To the credit of the authors, however, none of these proposals was developed from the start to address the facts of subject suppression. In the next chapter, I will argue that the subject suppression constructions are best analyzed as merging external arguments in the specifier of VP.

# Chapter 3

# The Syntax of Subject Suppression in Turkish

## 3.1 Introduction

In this chapter I will outline my proposal for the syntactic structure of subject suppression, and present evidence in support of the proposal. The gist of the proposal is that suppressed subjects are merged in the specifier of VP, and semantically interpreted via a special composition rule, as discussed by Kratzer (1996, p. 113) before being dismissed in favour of her VoiceP proposal. Such an approach readily accounts for the data we have seen in Chapters 1 and 2, without having to resort to noun or pseudo-noun incorporation. The motivation for this structure is that merging the suppressed subjects in the specifier of vP would leave them on the edge of the phase and above Existential Closure (Heim, 1982; Diesing, 1992; Kelepir, 2001), which would prevent the subjects' interpretation as nonspecific indefinites. This explanation is matched by my proposal for the structure of a neutral transitive sentence, where a specific direct object is raised above Existential Closure precisely by moving to the specifier of vP.

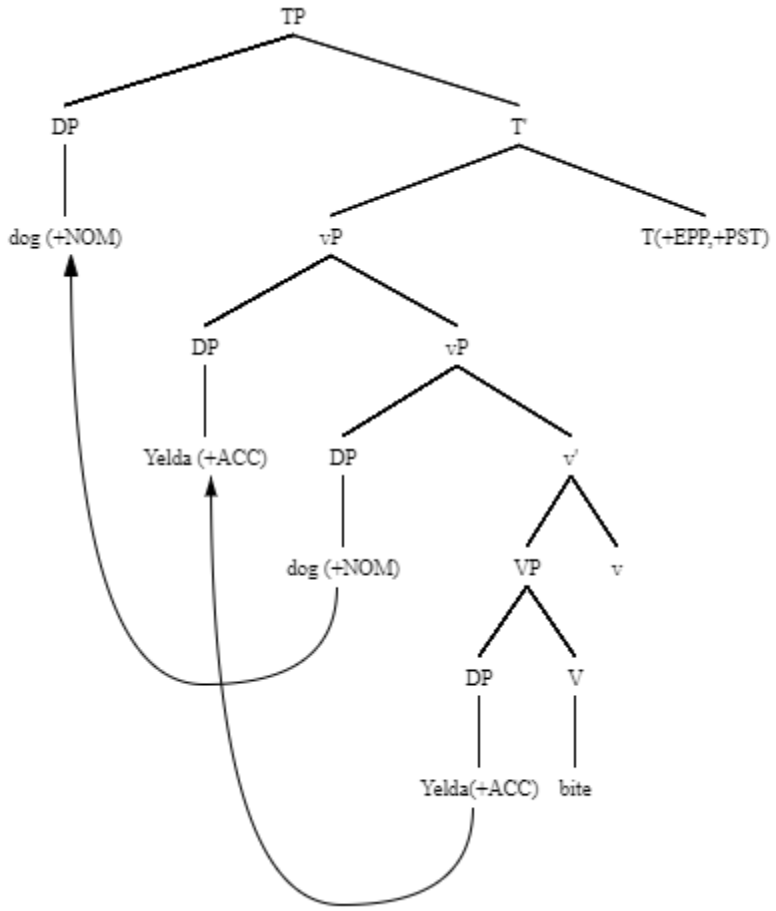
In the next section, I show the structure for a neutral transitive sentence without subject suppression, so as to show my theoretical assumptions and serve as a benchmark for comparing the subject suppression structures. Section 3.3 will present the structure I propose for transitive sentences with subject suppression, and section 3.4 will cover intransitive verbs with subject suppression. Section 3.5 presents empirical evidence for sections 3.3 and 3.4.

## 3.2 The Transitive Sentence with No Subject Suppression

(51) illustrates the structure for (50), a transitive sentence with no subject suppression.[26] Note that the modification of the subject with the indefinite article changes the subject's interpretation from definite to specific indefinite:

(50) (Bir) Köpek Yelda-yı ısır-dı.
one dog Yelda-ACC bite-PST
'(A certain dog) The dog bit Yelda.'

(51)




[26] The IPA values of the letters are as follows — word stress is usually on the last syllable: a = /a/; b = /b/; c = /d͡ʒ/; ç = /t͡ʃ/; d = /d/; e = /e/; f = /f/; g = /g/; ğ = /ː/, /‿/, /j/; h = /h/; ı = /ɯ/; i = /i/; j = /ʒ/; k = /k/; l = /l/; m = /m/; n = /n/; o = /o/; ö = /ø/; p = /p/; r = /ɾ/; s = /s/; ş = /ʃ/; t = /t/; u = /u/; ü = /y/; v = /v/; y = /j/; z = /z/.

T in Turkish has an Extended Projection Principle (EPP) feature that is checked by a D head in the specifier of TP. The subject, merged in the specifier of vP, raises to the specifier of TP to check its strong Case feature, triggering phi-agreement on the verb,[27] and also checking EPP on T. Note that according to the proposed structure, the subject and the object should be equidistant from vP to T for purposes of movement, and the requirement of the subject to move for checking strong Case eliminates optionality.

I follow Nagai (2013) in assuming that the direct object DP moves within vP to check its strong accusative Case feature. Since Existential Closure is above vP (Diesing, 1992; Kelepir, 2001), the movement of the direct object also leaves it at the edge of the vP phase and thus above Existential Closure, resulting in a definite or specific interpretation.

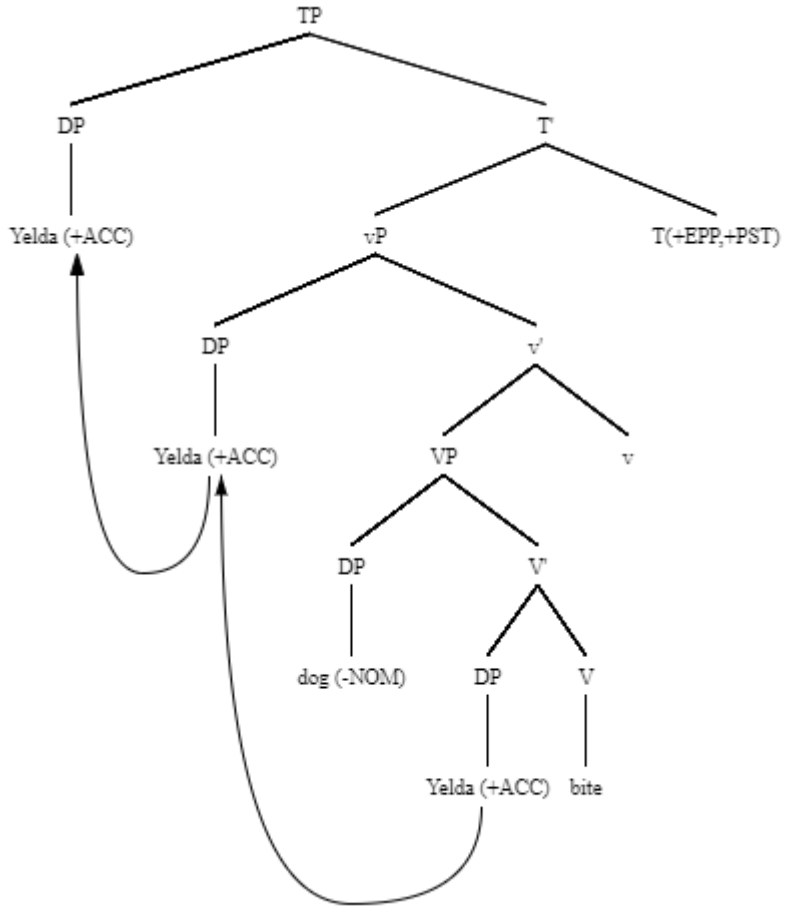
## 3.3 The Transitive Sentence with Subject Suppression

(53) is the structure I propose for (52), a transitive sentence with subject suppression. Modification of the subject with the indefinite article indicates that the subject was singular:[28]

(52) Yelda-yı (bir) köpek ısır-dı.
Yelda-ACC one dog bite-PST
'A dog or dogs (A dog) bit Yelda.'

[27] Phi-agreement is not visible in (50) since the third person singular does not have an agreement morpheme.
[28] *Bir* modification also allows the subject to be further modified by adjectives without any restrictions.

(53)




The suppressed subject is merged in the specifier of VP, since merging it in the specifier of vP would leave it at the edge of the phase and above Existential Closure (Heim, 1982; Diesing, 1992; Kelepir, 2001). The subject has weak Case that can be checked in situ. In the absence of the subject as a candidate, the specific object, which has moved above Existential Closure to check strong accusative Case, is attracted to the specifier of TP via the EPP on T. Since Turkish does not have phi-agreement on T for objects, no agreement is triggered.

The question that follows from this proposal is how the suppressed subject merged in the specifier of VP is interpreted as the external argument and agent. I hypothesize that the language is able to apply a special composition rule, like the one suggested by Kratzer (1996, p. 113) before

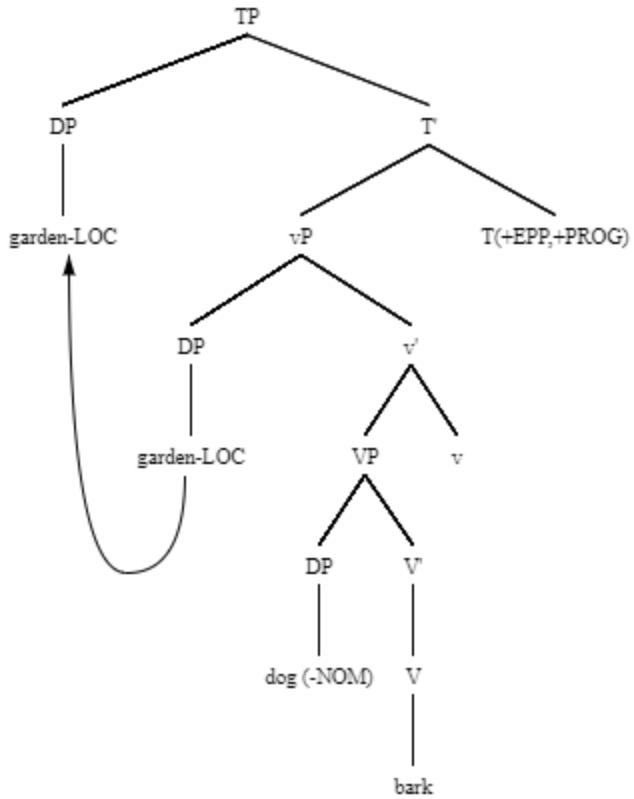
being dismissed in favour of her VoiceP proposal, to introduce external arguments in LF. If true, we should expect differences between how external arguments are introduced in subject suppression constructions and neutral sentences, and this expectation will be borne out in section 3.5.

## 3.4 The Intransitive Sentence with Subject Suppression

(55) is the structure I propose for the intransitive subject suppression sentence in (54) with an unergative verb. Modification of the subject with the indefinite article indicates that the subject is singular:

(54) Bahçe-de (bir) köpek havlı-yor.
garden-LOC one dog bark-PROG
'A dog or dogs (A dog) is/are barking in the garden.'

(55)



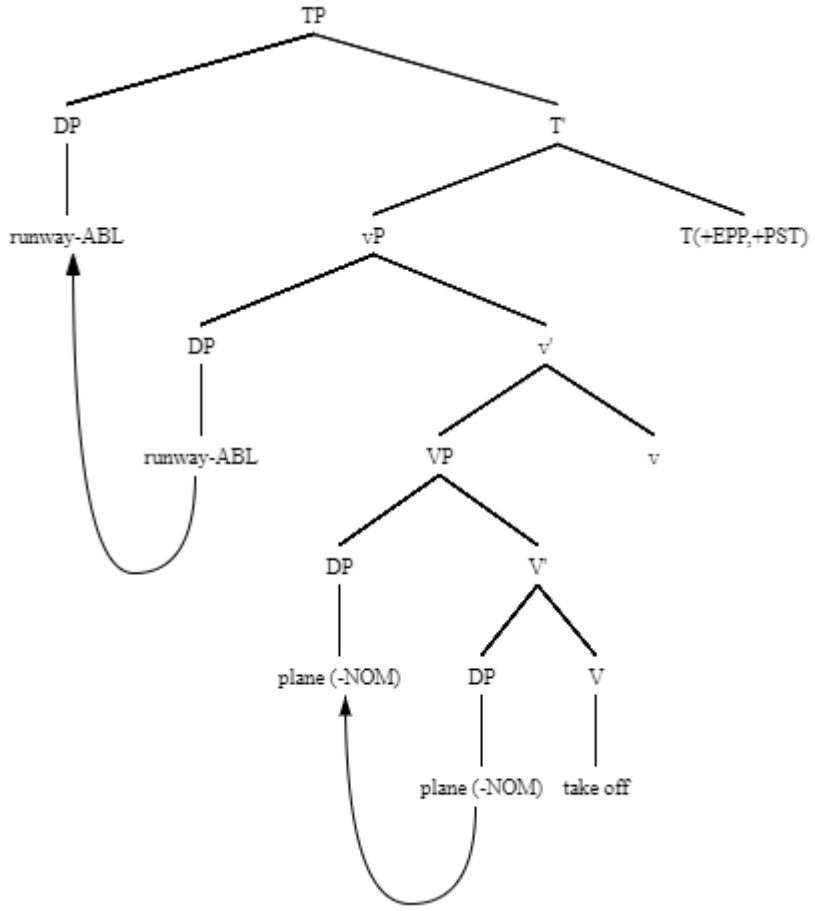
As with OSV subject suppression, I propose that the subject of the Oblique-NP SV construction is merged in the specifier of VP to remain below Existential Closure. The subject has a weak Case feature that can be checked in situ, and is semantically interpreted as an external argument in LF via a special composition rule. Since, in section 2.2, we saw that noun phrases with oblique cases are always interpreted as specific,[29] this would require them to be merged in the specifier of vP in order to stay above Existential Closure. From that phase edge, the oblique noun phrase — which I have described as a DP, but could also be a DP within a KP or PP — is attracted by the EPP on T to the specifier of TP.

(57) is the structure I propose for the intransitive subject suppression sentence in (56) with an unaccusative verb. This structure is all but a copy of the structure for an unergative verb except for the suppressed subject being merged as the internal argument of the verb, and then raising to the specifier of VP instead of vP:

(56) Pist-ten (bir) uçak kalk-tı.
runway-ABL one plane take off-PST
'A plane or planes (A plane) took off from the runway.'

[29] In this chapter, I will be using 'noun phrase' to refer to both DPs and NPs without differentiating.

(57)




## 3.5 Evidence for the Proposal

### 3.5.1 Relativization Facts

As was shown in Chapter 1, the direct objects and oblique-NPs in subject suppression constructions are relativized like subjects. This follows directly if they are at the specifier of TP, which is where the subject is in a neutral transitive sentence. Likewise, the inability of suppressed subjects to head relative clauses follows from their non-argument position in the syntactic structure.

### 3.5.2 Lack of Phi-Agreement

As shown in (58), coordinated definite or specific subjects trigger phi-agreement, resulting in a plural morpheme on the verb:

(58) Köpek ve tilki Yelda-yı ısır-dı-**lar**.
dog and fox Yelda-ACC bite-PST-**PL**
'The dog and the fox bit Yelda.'

However, when suppressed subjects are coordinated in the corresponding construction, there is no phi-agreement. Note that this is true even when the suppressed subjects have been modified with the indefinite article:

(59) Yelda-yı köpek ve tilki ısır-dı**(*-LAR)**.
Yelda-ACC dog and fox bite-PST-**PL**
'A dog or dogs and a fox or foxes bit Yelda.'

(60) Yelda-yı bir köpek ve bir tilki ısır-dı**(*-LAR)**.
Yelda-ACC one dog and one fox bite-PST-**PL**
'A dog and a fox bit Yelda.'

These examples show that suppressed subjects are not raised to the specifier of TP, where they would trigger phi-agreement.

### 3.5.3 Data from Öztürk (2005)

The following data from Öztürk, repeated from Chapter 2, provides more evidence that suppressed subjects are not external arguments in the syntactic structure:

The ungrammaticality of passivizing the object of a transitive verb with a nonspecific subject patterns with the subject of an unaccusative verb, and shows that the subjects in both cases are not external arguments:

(44a) Ali-yi arı sok-tu.
Ali-ACC bee sting-PST
'Ali got bee stung.'

(44b) *Ali sok-ul-du.
Ali sting-PASS-PST
'Ali was bee stung.'

(45a) Arı Ali-yi sok-tu.
bee Ali-ACC sting-PST
'The bee stung Ali.'

(45b) Ali (bu) arı tarafından sok-ul-du.
Ali this bee by sting-PASS-PST
'Ali was stung by (this) the bee.'

(46a) Çocuk büyü-dü.
child grow-PST
'The child grew up.'

(46b) *Çocuk büyü-n-dü.
child grow-PASS-PST
'The child was grown up.'

Further evidence that nonspecific subjects are not external arguments comes from the fact that they cannot, as argued by Öztürk, control PRO:

(47a) Polis$_i$ Ali-yi [PRO$_i$ sorgula-mak için] tutukla-dı.
police Ali-ACC interrogate-INF for arrest-PST
'The police arrested Ali to interrogate him.'

(47b) *Ali-yi [PRO$_i$ sorgula-mak için] polis$_i$ tutukla-dı.
Ali-ACC interrogate-INF for police arrest-PST
'Police-arresting happened to Ali to interrogate him.'

A final fact showing that nonspecific subjects are not external arguments is the ungrammaticality of such sentences with adverbs that are oriented towards agentive external arguments, as in (13):

(48a) Polis Ali-yi kasıtlı olarak tutukla-dı.
police Ali-ACC intentional being arrest-PST
'The police arrested Ali intentionally.'

(48b) *Ali-yi kasıtlı olarak polis tutukla-dı.
Ali-ACC intentional being police arrest-PST
'Police-arresting happened to Ali intentionally.'

### 3.5.4 Ungrammaticality of Light Verbs

As shown by the minimal pair in (61), light verbs are ungrammatical with subject suppression:

(61a) Köpek Yelda-yı hastanelik et-ti.
dog Yelda-ACC bedridden[30] do-PST
'The dog made Yelda bedridden.'

(61b) *Yelda-yı köpek hastanelik et-ti.
Yelda-ACC dog bedridden do-PST
'A dog or dogs made Yelda bedridden.'

If light verbs are taken to stand for little v, or with any proposal that analyzes light verb constructions as having a larger structure than VP, it is a given that a suppressed subject cannot be merged in the specifier of VP as in my proposal.

### 3.5.5 Modification with the *bile* – 'even' Contrastive Focus Particle

In sentences without subject suppression, the *bile* contrastive focus particle can modify the subject to express the meaning that even that subject performed the action given in the verb, as in (62):

(50) Köpek Yelda-yı ısır-dı.
dog Yelda-ACC bite-PST
'The dog bit Yelda.'

(62) Köpek **bile** Yelda-yı ısır-dı.
dog even Yelda-ACC bite-PST
'Even the dog bit Yelda.'

Thus, (62) means that some animals bit Yelda, and even the dog did so.

In contrast, when the *bile* particle is used after suppressed subjects, it indicates that an event that followed a series of events united by a common characteristic took place. Thus, (63) would be felicitous in a context where a series of misfortunes befell Yelda:

(52) Yelda-yı köpek ısır-dı.
Yelda-ACC dog bite-PST
'A dog or dogs bit Yelda.'

[30] The literal translation is 'worthy of a hospital' i.e. requiring medical attention.

(63) Yelda-yı köpek **bile** ısır-dı.
Yelda-ACC dog **even** bite-PST
'Even (a dog / dogs) bit Yelda.'

This difference in interpretation is consistent with a structural difference where the contrastive focus particle is modifying a predicate in the subject suppression constructions. The particle in these contexts does not express the meaning that the suppressed subject performed the same action in addition to other agents, since the suppressed subject is not an argument. The transformation of the suppressed subject from an argument into a predicate is, in turn, consistent with the requirement for a special composition rule for the interpretation of the suppressed subject as an external argument. By changing the input configuration for the semantic interpretation,[31] the focus particle forces the suppressed subject to be interpreted through Predicate Modification.

### 3.5.6 Modification with the *dA* – 'too' Contrastive Focus Particle

In sentences without subject suppression, the *dA* contrastive focus particle can modify the subject to express the meaning that the subject performed the action given in the verb in addition to a previously mentioned subject, as in (64):

(64a) Bir köpek Yelda-yı ısır-dı.
one dog Yelda-ACC bite-PST
'A certain dog bit Yelda.'

(64b) Bir köpek **de** Yonca-yı ısır-dı.
one dog too Yonca-ACC bite-PST
'Yet another dog bit Yonca.'

This data shows us that the subjects in these sentences are entities that can be contrasted with one another. However, the pattern is not repeated with subject suppression:

(65a) Yelda-yı bir köpek ısır-dı.
Yelda-ACC one dog bite-PST
'A dog bit Yelda.'

[31] Most likely by raising the suppressed subject to the focus particle's specifier — see the discussion of the question particle in Kahnemuyipour & Kornfilt (2006).

(65b) #Yonca-yı bir köpek **de** ısır-dı.
Yonca-ACC one dog too bite-PST
'A dog bit Yonca, too.'

(65b) cannot felicitously follow (65a), since the dog that bit Yonca is not a separate entity from the one that bit Yelda. As with (63), (65b) would be felicitous in a context where a series of misfortunes befell Yonca, all topped by getting bitten by a dog. This is in line with 'dog bite' in (65b) being a predicate. As we saw in the previous section, the transformation of the suppressed subject into a predicate can be explained by the focus particle changing the input configuration for semantic interpretation, and forcing interpretation through Predicate Modification.

### 3.5.7 Ungrammaticality of Low Adverbs

Low, VP adverbs, like 'completely,' cannot be employed with subject suppression constructions, as shown in (66):

(66a) Köpekbalığı adam-ı **tamamen** ye-di.
shark man-ACC completely eat-PST
'The shark ate the man completely.'

(66b) *Adam-ı köpekbalığı **tamamen** ye-di.
man-ACC shark completely eat-PST
'(A shark / sharks) ate the man completely.'

(66c) *Adam-ı **tamamen** köpekbalığı ye-di.
man-ACC completely shark eat-PST
'(A shark / sharks) ate the man completely.'

We had seen the ungrammaticality of (66b) in Chapter 1, but why is a low adverb not acceptable preceding the suppressed subject? This can again be explained by the necessary input configuration for the suppressed subject to be interpreted as an external argument. By changing the input configuration, the low adverb forces interpretation through Predicate Modification, which, unlike the focus particles, is not possible in this context.

### 3.5.8 Restrictions of Lexical Semantics

Sentences with subject suppression do not have the flexibility to combine any noun as a grammatical subject with any verb. Suppressed subjects are sensitive to lexical semantics in a way that regular subjects are not. Thus, (67) is a perfectly grammatical, albeit unusual sentence:

(67) Adam Yelda-yı ısır-dı.
man Yelda-ACC bite-PST
'The man bit Yelda.'

However, its counterpart with subject suppression is not acceptable:

(68) *Yelda-yı adam ısır-dı.
Yelda-ACC man bite-PST
'A man or men bit Yelda.'

(69), which is grammatical, shows that the problem with (68) is not a frequency effect: Any animal is acceptable for subject suppression with the verb 'bite':

(69) Yelda-yı kaplumbağa ısır-dı.
Yelda-ACC turtle bite-PST
'A turtle or turtles bit Yelda.'

(70) and (71) show in minimal pairs that unacceptability of subject suppression arises due to certain combinations of verbs and agents:

(70a) Cin Yelda-yı ısır-dı.
genie Yelda-ACC bite-PST
'The genie bit Yelda.'

(70b) *Yelda-yı cin ısır-dı.
Yelda-ACC genie bite-PST
'A genie or genies bit Yelda.'

(70c) Yelda-yı cin çarp-tı.
Yelda-ACC genie hex-PST
'A genie or genies hexed Yelda.'

(71a) Robot Yelda-yı ısır-dı.
robot Yelda-ACC bite-PST
'The robot bit Yelda.'

(71b) *Yelda-yı robot ısır-dı.
Yelda-ACC robot bite-PST
'A robot or robots bit Yelda.'

(71c) Yelda-yı robot yakala-dı.
Yelda-ACC robot catch-PST
'A robot or robots caught Yelda.'

This restriction is not surprising in light of my proposal that suppressed subjects are semantically interpreted as external arguments through a fundamentally different channel than the subjects of neutral sentences. If suppressed subjects are indeed interpreted through a special composition rule, this may be less suited for highly unusual combinations, and require presupposition accommodation. This hypothesis is supported by the fact that the unacceptable sentences can be made acceptable by contextualizing them in imaginary fictional worlds.

## 3.6 Conclusion

This chapter presented my proposal to account for the subject suppression data in Chapter 1. I argued that suppressed subjects are merged in the specifier of VP, and semantically interpreted as external arguments through a special composition rule, as per Kratzer (1996). This approach readily explains the observations in Chapters 1 and 2, and is further corroborated by the behaviour of contrastive focus particles, low adverbs, light verbs, unusual lexical combinations, and lack of phi-agreement for seemingly plural suppressed subjects.

If the data patterns discussed in the thesis are to be generated without making recourse to introducing external arguments in LF, a proposal based on some form of head, phrasal, or pseudo incorporation appears to be inevitable. Which, in turn, means that the incorporation of subjects should be considered as a viable possibility in generative grammar.

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