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Turkish Impersonal Passives

What are Turkish Impersonal Passives?

- In Turkish, passives are formed by attaching a passive suffix *-Il/(I)n* to a verb stem (Göskel and Kerslake 2005).
- Attaching a passive suffix to a transitive verb → regular passive, and attaching a passive suffix to an intransitive, reciprocal, or reflexive verb → impersonal passive (IP)
- Unaccusative: intransitive verb whose subject originates in object position and is non-agentive.
- Unergative: intransitive verb with an agentive subject.

Regular passive (Özsoy 2009):

a) Bahçıvan çiçek-ler-i sula-dı.
gardener flower-PL-ACC water-PAST.3
"The gardener watered the flowers."

b) Çiçek-ler (bahçıvan tarafından) sula-**n**-dı.
flower-PL (gardener by) water-**PASS**-PAST.3
"The flowers were watered (by the gardener)."

Impersonal passives:

Unergative (Özsoy 2009)
a) Çocuk-lar bütün gece dans et-ti-ler.
child-PL whole night dance-PAST-PL
"The children danced the whole night."

b) Bütün gece (*çocuk-lar tarafından) dans ed-**il**-di.
whole night child-PL by dance -**PASS**-PAST.3
"It was danced the whole night (*by the children)."

Unaccusative (Özkaragöz 1986)
a) İnsan bu göl-de boğul-ur.
human this lake-LOC drown-AOR.3
"A person can drown in this lake."

b) Bu göl-de boğul-**un**-ur.
this lake drown-**PASS**-AOR.3
"One can drown in this lake."

Double passive (Özkaragöz 1986)
a) Harp-te insan vur-**ul**-ur.
war-LOC one shoot-**PASS**-AOR.3
"One is shot in war."

b) Harp-te vur-**ul-un**-ur.
War-LOC shoot-**PASS-PASS**-AOR.3
"One is shot in war."

Evidence for a Null Pronoun

- Turkish IPs have a lot of similarities with Cinque's (1988) analysis of Italian impersonal argument "si" but also some differences.

T	Verb	Turkish	Italian [–arg]	Italian [+arg]
Specific	Transitive	any [+by-phrase]	arb	arb
	Unergative	**arb/1pl** [–by-phrase]	arb	arb
	Unaccusative	**ungrammatical**	**1pl**	ungram.
Non-specific	Transitive	any [+by-phrase]	ungram./**arb**	arb
	Unergative	**arb** [–by-phrase]	ungram. **/arb**	**arb**
	Unaccusative	**arb** [–by-phrase]	**ungram. /arb**	**ungram.**

- Cinque's (1988) Italian impersonal *si* must be human and is ungrammatical with *by-phrases*.
- Özsoy (2009) and Biktimir (1986) among others, point out that the implicit subject of Turkish IPs must be human, supporting an impersonal pronominal argument presence.
- These similarities and the ungrammaticality of IPs with *by-phrases* implies presence of an impersonal pronominal argument.
- Both, Turkish unaccusative and passive IPs and Italian [–arg] *si,* seem to be conditioned by T (tense).

Voice Heads

- Sigurðsson's (2011) analyzes Icelandic New Passive, which includes an impersonal argument, using the following Voice heads:

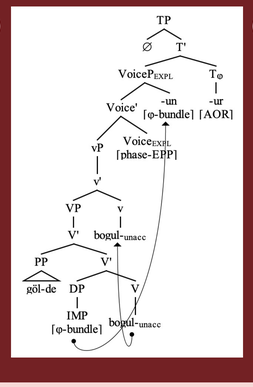
$Voice_{ACT/+AG}$ (in structures with agentive predicates)
$Voice_{ACT/–AG}$ (with nonagentive predicates)
$Voice_{PASS/+AG}$ (with passive agentive predicates)
$Voice_{PASS/–AG}$ (with passive nonagentive predicates)
$Voice_{PSYCH}$ (with psych predicates)
$Voice_{FATE}$ (with unaccusative predicates with a fate reading, like *drift*, *swamp*, etc.)
$Voice_{EXPL}$ (with anticausative predicates and regular unaccusatives)

- Voice heads used in this analysis to account for different Turkish passives: $Voice_{EXPL}$, $Voice_{PASS}$, $Voice_{ACT}$

Analysis

- **Distributed Morphology (DM)** (Halle and Marantz 1993): a framework where syntax and morphology use the same computational mechanisms which interact. Specifically, syntax is the derivational force.
- Assuming the DM framework, the impersonal pronominal argument can surface as a passive suffix (previously proposed by Baker et al. 1989)
- The passive of a transitive = $Voice_{PASS}$ (normal passives)
- The passive of an unergative = $Voice_{ACT}$ + external impersonal pronoun as passive morpheme
- The passive of an unaccusative = $Voice_{EXPL}$, meaning Voice has expletive θ-role + internal impersonal pronoun as passive morpheme
- Double passive = $Voice_{PASS}$ + impersonal pronoun, which results in two passive morphemes
- The pronoun is licensed by T because Turkish IPs must occur in a non-specific or suspended time reference with unaccusative and passive IPs

(unacc.)



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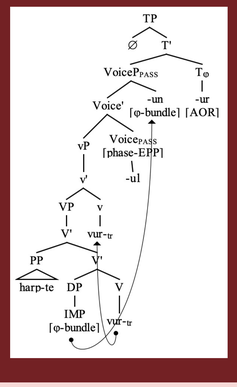

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