

Turkish Sluicing or Stripping? Why Not Both?

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1. Introduction

Two analyses have been put forth for sluice-like constructions (SLCs) in Turkish: (i) Hankamer (2012) argues that a genuine sluicing analysis as in Ross 1969 and Merchant 2001 is not possible for such structures in a wh-in-situ language such as Turkish, and claims that these SLCs are the result of stripping involving two independent clauses; (ii) Ince (2006, 2012) argues that SLCs in Turkish involve the dislocation of a wh-phrase out of an embedded clause via focus movement followed by deletion of that embedded TP/IP. We show that both the independent clause claim per the stripping account (Hankamer 2012) and the embedded clause claim per the ‘sluicing’ account (Ince (2006, 2012) are possible for SLCs in Turkish. In support of such ambiguity underlying the source of SLCs in Turkish, we provide three empirical arguments: (a) distribution of the matrix question particle *ki*, (b) backward anaphora involving SLCs, and (c) modification by negative polarity adverbs such as *hala* ‘still’ *asla* ‘never’. These findings further the discussion on ellipsis by demonstrating that SLCs in a wh-in-situ language in which the ellipsis site cannot be a cleft construction (see Ince 2006, 2012) can be consistent with either a stripping or a ‘sluicing’ account with an embedded clause as its source.

1.1. Background

Sluicing, considered a PF-deletion operation (see Ross 1969, Hankamer and Sag 1976, Merchant 2001, 2004, a.o., for non-deletion accounts see, e.g., Chung et al 1995, a.o.), deletes an IP clause (Ellipsis site=ES) under identity with an antecedent clause (AC) after a wh-phrase (wh-remnant) moves to the edge of CP of the embedded clause. Consider a sluicing example in English:

(1) [John read something_{correlate}]_{AC} but I don’t know [CP [wh-remnant **what**_i] [IP ~~John read t_i~~ ES]]

The Ross/Merchant style sluicing for English in (1), where the wh-remnant is dislocated via wh-movement to the left periphery of an embedded clause with subsequent deletion of that embedded TP/IP clause should not be possible in a wh-in-situ language. However, Turkish has SLCs involving remnants of arguments as shown in (2), adjunct as in (3), and multiple sluicing as in (4).

(i) Arguments remnants

(2) a. Ali birisin-i sev-iyor, ama kim-i bil-mi-yor-um.
Ali someone-ACC love-PROG-3SG but who-ACC know-NEG-PROG-I SG
‘Ali loves someone, but I don’t know who.’¹

b. Hasan-Ø birin-e para ver-miş-Ø; ama kim-e bil-mi-yor-um.
Hasan-NOM one-DAT money give-PST-3SG but who-DAT know-NEG-PRES-1SG
‘Hasan gave a book to someone; but I don’t know who (to).’ (Ince 2012:10)

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¹ Abbreviations are as follows: ABL=ablative, ACC=accusative, COMP=complementizer, DAT=dative, EVID.PST=evidential past, FUT=future, GEN=genitive, NML=nominalizer, NOM=nominative, POSS=possessive agreement, PRES=present, PROG=progressive, PRT=participle, PST=past, NEG=negation, SG=singular.

(ii) Adjunct remnants

- (3) Ali bir yer-e git-ti, ama nere-ye bil-mi-yor-um.
 Ali one place-DAT go-PST but where-DAT don't-know-I
 'Ali went somewhere, but I don't know where.'

(iii) Multiple sluicing

- (4) Ahmet-Ø biri-ne bir-şey ver-miş-Ø; ama kim-e ne bil-mi-yor-um.
 Ahmet-NOM one-DAT one-thing give-PST but who-DAT what know-NEG-PROG-1SG
 'Ahmet gave something to someone; but I don't know what to whom.' (Ince 2012:13)²

1.2. Current analyses of SLC in Turkish

Three accounts have been postulated for SLCs Turkish: First, Ince (2006, 2012) argues for Merchant-style English type sluicing invoking focus movement of a *wh*-element with subsequent IP-deletion as shown in (5):

- (5) Ali birisi-yle evlenmiş, ama [_{CP} kim-le_i focus moved [_{IP/TP} Ali-t_i evlenmiş]] bil-mi-yor-um.
 Ali someone-with married but who-with Ali — married don't know-I
 'Ali married someone, but I don't know who.'

Second, Hankamer (2012) empirically argues for stripping (see (6)), with an intonation break (indicated by #) placed after the *wh*-remnant indicating two independent clauses, and rules out English type sluicing in (1) for Turkish; i.e. against an embedding as a source for SLC:

- (6) Ali birisi-ni azarlamış, ama kim-i? # [bil-mi-yor-um].
 Ali someone-ACC scolded, but who-ACC don't-know-I
 'Ali scolded someone, but I don't know who.'

In addition to the intonation consideration above, Hankamer cites contrasting properties of sluicing and stripping: Sluicing strands *wh*-phrases, is unbounded, and can go backward while stripping can strand any phrase, is local, and cannot go backward. We consider these in section (3).

Third, Şener (2013) advocates, contra Ince, a non-movement analysis in the spirit of Dikken et al's (2000) discontinuous deletion up to the focused constituent, i.e., the *wh*-phrase. A unifying feature of Ince and Şener's accounts is that the remnant is part of the embedded complement clause while Hankamer's account argues for two independent clauses only one of which involves the remnant.³

2. Possible sources for SLC in Turkish

We show that both Hankamer's two independent clause analysis and Ince's embedding analysis (without committing ourselves to the particulars of Ince's account) may be possible sources for SLCs in (2-4). Our evidence is based on: I. Question particle *ki*, II. Backward sluicing, and III. Modification by adverbial negative polarity items (NPIs).

2.1. Question Particle *ki*

The question particle *ki* occurs only in interrogatives as the contrast in grammaticality between (7b) and (7c) indicates:

²-*iyor* is glossed as either PRES or PROG in Ince's examples. *-DİK* is sometimes glossed as NML, COMP, PRT depending on the source of cited data.

³Şener's account will not be considered further in this paper due to space limitations.

- (13) Kim-i *(gördüğünü) bilmediğim halde,
 Who-ACC (saw) not-know-I although
 Hasan-nın biri-ni gördüğün-den emin-im.
 Hasan-GEN someone-ACC saw-ABL sure-I
 ‘Although I don’t know who, I am sure Hasan saw someone.’ (from Hankamer 2012)

However, it is not that difficult to provide examples involving backward anaphora as (14) suggests:

- (14) a. (henüz) kim-e öğren-e-me-diğ-im halde,
 (as of now) who-DAT findout-can-NEG-NML-POSS despite
 Ali-nin birisin-e laf yetiştirdiğın-den emin-im.
 Ali-GEN someone-DAT word-transport-ABL sure-1SG
 ‘Although, (as of now), I haven’t been able to find out who, I am sure that Ali is gossiping with someone.’
- b. (henüz) kim-i bil-me-diğ-im halde,
 (as of now) who-ACC know-NEG-NML-1SG despite
 Ali birisi-ni iş-e al-acak-mış.
 Ali someone-ACC job-DAT take-FUT-EVID.PST
 ‘Although I don’t know who, Ali, supposedly, is going to hire someone.’
- c. (henüz) kim öğren-e-me-diğ-im halde, birisi suç-u üstlen-miş.
 (as of now)who findout-can-NEG-NML-POSS despite someone crime-ACC claim-EVID.PST
 ‘Although I don’t know who, someone claimed responsibility for the crime.’

As far as boundedness is concerned, stripping is claimed to be local whereas sluicing is unbounded:

- (15) Hasan bir yer-e git-ti, ama nere-ye (*biz-im) bil-me-miz imkansız.
 Hasan one place-DAT go-PST but where-DAT (we-GEN) know-PRT-AGR impossible
 ‘Hasan went somewhere, but it is impossible for us to know where.’ (Hankamer 2012, #18)

As Hankamer’s own judgment shows, however, (15) is grammatical if *pro* occurs as the most embedded subject rather than the overt pronoun *bizim*.⁵ In short, sentences not predicted by the stripping analysis nonetheless do exist.

2.3. Modification by adverb-NPIs

Both *hala* ‘still’ and *asla* ‘never’ must be in the scope of negation. In ungrammatical (16b) the NPI adverbs appear without licensing negation.

- (16) a. Ali hala / asla gel-me-di.
 Ali still / never come-NEG-PST
 ‘Ali (still) hasn’t come yet.’ / ‘Ali has never come.’
- b. *Ali hala / asla gel-di.
 Ali still / never come-PST

Next, consider a SLC where the co-occurrence of these NPI adverbs with the wh-remnant in the absence of negation yields an ungrammatical sentence as shown in (17a). (17b) illustrates that (17a) without the NPI is grammatical, pointing to the failure of NPI licensing in (17a).

- (17) a. Ali birisin-i davet etmiş, * [ama asla kim-i]
 Ali someone-ACC invited but never who-ACC
 ‘Ali supposedly invited someone, but (never) who (never).’
- b. Ali birisin-i davet etmiş, [ama kim-i]?

⁵ Null subjects are a common phenomenon in Turkish since it is a pro-drop language. As to why (15) should improve when *pro* surfaces instead of an overt pronoun deserves more scrutiny.

In comparison, as (18a) and (19a) below show, the occurrence of these NPI adverbs is licit when the negation morpheme *-mE* attaches to the matrix verb in the second conjunct. The adverbs may occur to the left or the right of the *wh*-remnant.⁶ In contrast, the (b) examples of both (18) and (19) are ungrammatical without negation.

(18) a. Ali birisi-ni davet et-miş,
 Ali someone-ACC invitation do-EVID.PAST
 ama/ve (asla) kim-i (asla) bil-e-**mi**-yeceğ-im.
 but/and (never) who-ACC (never) know-can-**NEG**-FUT-1SG
 ‘Ali invited someone, but/and I will never be able to know who.’

b. *Ali birisi-ni davet et-miş, ama/ve (asla) kim-i (asla) öğreneceğim.

(19) a. Ali birisin-den borç almış, ama (hala) kim-den (hala) öğren-e-**me**-di-m.
 Ali someone-ABL debt took but (still) who-ABL (still) find out-can-**NEG**-PST-1SG
 ‘Ali borrowed money from someone, but I still cannot find out from whom.’

b. *Ali birisin-den borç almış, ama (hala) kim-den (hala) öğren-di-m.
 find-out-PST-1SG

In short, the embedding view seems to be better equipped with respect to NPI adverb licensing given that these elements must be in the scope of a *c*-commanding licenser (see Zidani-Eroğlu 1997, a.o.), here negation affixed to the verb, and given that the only negation bearing predicate is the matrix one in the second conjunct in a SLC. Such a negated predicate cannot license the NPI adverb without also having the *wh*-remnant in its scope given the word order possibilities of these two lexical items in relation to one another in (18,19) and the licensing negation.

As far as the stripping account is concerned, the sentence boundary with respect to the above word order arrangements would be as follow:

(20) a. *Ali birisin-den borç almış, ama (hala) kim-den. # öğren-e-**me**-dim.

b. √ Ali birisin-den borç almış, ama kim-den. # (hala) öğren-e-**me**-dim.

At least one of the word order alignment, namely where the NPI adverb occurs to the left of the *wh*-remnant, as in (20a) is incorrectly ruled out given grammatical (18a) and (19a) above. In order to rule it in, a stripping account would have to allow NPI licensing across two independent sentences, an unattested licensing condition for strict NPIs.

3. Conclusion and other considerations

The data in section 2 supports the conclusion that there are two sources for Turkish SLCs in (2-4): (a) they involve two independent clauses with the *wh*-remnant surviving stripping, as claimed by Hankamer; and (b) the *wh*-remnant originates as part of an embedded clause in the second conjunct. An embedding source for the *wh*-remnant paves the way for an account of Turkish SLCs via a ‘sluicing’ mechanism such as in Ince’s work. Such an account is, of course, consistent with a prediction made by the Ross/Merchant style of genuine sluicing provided Turkish has at its disposal language-specific mechanisms that allow the dislocation of the *wh*-phrase to the left periphery of the embedded source TP/IP, and the subsequent deletion of that TP/IP.

⁶ Adverbs such *muhtemelen* ‘probably’, *açıkçası* ‘frankly’ have the same distribution as the NPI adverbials in (18,19) in SLCs. Surprisingly, though, the VP NPI adverbial *hiç* ‘never’ is licit only in the position to the right of the *wh*-remnant. The adverb *kesinlikle* ‘definitely’ patterns with *hiç* rather than with *muhtemelen* and *açıkçası* in this regard. The reported judgments in this footnote and the ones regarding (18, 19) were elicited from eight native speakers of Turkish.

In Ince's work, the structure of the E-site of a SLC as in (2-4) is assumed to be isomorphic to that of the antecedent clause. However, an embedding structure shouldn't be considered synonymous with an isomorphic E-site as non-isomorphic embedded E-sites are possible (for a variety of copular structures as possible sources, see e.g., Adams and Tomioka (2012) for Mandarin Chinese, Paul and Potsdam (2012) for Malagasy, and Gribanova (2010, 2013), Gribanova and Manetta (2016) for Uzbek).

Gribanova (*ibid*) claims that two distinct reduced copular constructions (her 'nominative strategy' and her 'case-marked strategy'), which surface as nominalized clauses, constitute separate sources for Uzbek SLCs. We can rule out embeddings involving such nominalized reduced copular constructions as a source for Turkish SLCs. Although corresponding nominalized copular embeddings of both Uzbek strategies are available in their full structure in Turkish, their corresponding SLC counterparts are not possible because the lexical copular *ol-* 'be/become', unlike in Uzbek, cannot be deleted in Turkish (work in progress, for non-nominalized copular embeddings in SLCs see e.g., Ince 2006). Crucially, as far as a wh-in-situ language such as Turkish is concerned, we have shown that two sources are available for SLCs: one involves two independent clauses accommodating a stripping analysis as in Hankamer (2012); the other involves an embedding structure in the second conjunct, which provides a potential for a Ross/Merchant 'genuine sluicing' account.

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