DOES TURKISH SUBEXTRACTION INVOLVE PSEUDO-NOUN INCORPORATION OR NOUN-INCORPORATION?

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Recent literature (e.g. Massam 2001, Öztürk 2005) re-analyzes instances of some phenomena which were analyzed as “genuine” incorporation via head movement as a different phenomenon altogether, dubbed “Pseudo-Noun Incorporation” (PNI), which essentially views the “apparently” incorporated element as an NP which is simply aligned immediately next to the verb (before the verb in head-final languages and after the verb in head-initial ones). No head movement is involved. The “pseudo-incorporated” material is phrasal, rather than an N, as in “genuine” incorporation.

In this talk, I address some facts from Turkish which have not been widely discussed in the literature; some discussion is found in Kornfilt (2003): Subextraction from non-specific phrases is possible, while such subextraction from specific phrases is not:

(1a) ?Bir daha \([çî] \mbox{bir terzi}\) bul-a -ma -m [sen-in\_gibi\_i] one time a tailor find-ABL -NEG-1.SG you-GEN like 'I won't ever be able to find a tailor [-spec.] like you again.'

b. *Bir daha \([çî] \mbox{bir terzi}\)-yi bul-a -ma -m [sen-in\_gibi\_i] one time a tailor-ACC find-ABL -NEG-1.SG you -GEN like

Intended reading: Same as for (1a) but with the difference that the object \(\mbox{bir terzi}\) 'a tailor' is intended to have a [+spec.] interpretation.

These are facts that are somewhat reminiscent of Holmberg’s Effect, i.e. the interaction between verb movement and object shift in some Germanic languages, where the latter is contingent upon the former. Holmberg’s Effect (or H.’s Generalization) is illustrated by the following Swedish example:

(2) a. Jag \(\mbox{kysste hennes}\) into \([\mbox{vp tvo t0}]\)
I kissed her not

Both head-movement of the verb and Object Shift have applied; Object Shift couldn’t have applied if head movement had not applied first, as shown by the following ill-formed examples:

(2) b. *…att jag \(\mbox{hennes}\) inte \([\mbox{vp kysste t0}]\)
that I her not kissed

(Unsuccessful attempt at applying Object Shift, without verb movement, in an embedded clause)

(2) c. *Jag \(\mbox{har hennes}\) inte \([\mbox{kysste t0}]\)
I have her not kissed

(Unsuccessful attempt at applying Object Shift, without verb movement, in a root clause)


I argue that the “Specificity Condition” on subextraction does not cover all relevant facts of subextraction in Turkish, when interacting with the specificity of the hosts of the extracted subconstituents. One empirical reason for this criticism comes from the fact that subextraction out of oblique DPs is not possible, even when that DP is non-specific:
(3)a. *[e] bazı haydut-lar ]-dan  kaç -mış -lar [dev_gibi]i
    some  robber-PL -ABL  flee -REP.PAST-3.SG  giant like
Intended: 'They reportedly fled from some robbers [specific or non-specific] (big)
like giants.'

(3)b. *[e] Haydut-lar ]-dan  kaç -malı -sin  [dev_gibi]i
    robber-PL -ABL  flee -NEC-2.SG  giant like
Intended: 'You must flee from robbers [specific or non-specific] (big) like giants'.

All the sources of the examples we just saw are grammatical, including the sources
of the ungrammatical examples. The ungrammaticality of (3)a. and b., under a non-
specific reading, is a serious problem for the Specificity Constraint. At the same time,
the ill-formedness of such examples even under a non-specific reading of the host
shows that the (case) morphology on the host DP interacts with the extractability of a
subconstituent.

Instead of pointing towards the Specificity Constraint directly, I argue that what
makes the successful instances of subextraction possible is head-movement of the
noun heading the non-specific potential host, adjoining to the verb (and the inability
of the noun undergoing such head movement, when the DP is headed by case
morphology; that morphology is not realized for non-specific DPs, when the case is
structural, but oblique case morphology must be realized, irrespective of the DP’s
specificity). What’s at stake here is a form of the Government Transparency Corollary
(Baker 1988), recast in more recent terms as Phase Extension (cf. den Dikken 2007 a.,
b.):

(4) Den Dikken’s Phase Extension: Syntactic movement of the head H of a phase α
up to the head X of the node β dominating α extends the phase up from α to β; α loses
its phasehood in the process, and any constituent on the edge of α ends up in the
domain of the derived phase β as a result of Phase Extension.

Such an explanation would not be available, if the relevant Turkish facts were
instances of PNI, i.e. were best characterized as a simple concatenation of a bare NP
and a verb, as claimed in Öztürk (2005). I then turn to apparent problems for the
head-movement based analysis of these Turkish facts, pointed out by Öztürk, and
show, based on adjacency requirements (and their loose nature) of complex verbs in
Turkish, that the problems are indeed only apparent. One type of example for such
apparent problems:

Separability of the incorporated N-head of a "bare" DP from the verb by focus
particles like -ml, the focusing Y/N question particle, the particle -DA 'also, too', or
particles like bile 'even.

Response to the problem: Domains that clearly are a verbal phonological word (or
compound) can be “interrupted” by focus particles. Verbs with so-called complex
tense-aspect suffixes can exhibit the question particle within them.

Focus particles, including bile 'even', show up between the loanword and the
auxiliary:

    Hasan prayer  even do -PAST Hasan grateful even be -PAST
    'Hasan even prayed.'                 'Hasan was/became even grateful'.

Therefore, the fact that such focus particles can show up between the incorporated
nominal and the verb is not problematic for a “genuine” incorporation approach.

Time permitting, I will discuss the difference between this type of Noun Incorporation
and the instances originally discussed in Baker (1988), where NI results in changes
with respect to the valency of the verb, while the instances addressed in this study do
not trigger such changes.