Binding through Agree in Turkish

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1 Background

Two perspectives on the status of Condition A (Chomsky 1981):


• Condition A should be stated independently (Charnavel and Sportiche 2016; Charnavel 2019; Preminger 2019; Safir 2014).

Defenses of binding-as-Agree are often conceptually oriented (but see Murphy and Meyase 2020; Kratzer 2009: 191-193).

Relatively little attention has been paid to an important empirical question:

(1) Does binding show the morphological reflexes of phi-agreement expected under Agree-based accounts?

Today: A morphological argument in favor of binding through Agree.

The gist: In the Turkish nominal domain, certain complex pronominals can agree only if they bind.

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Glossing abbreviations: 1 = first person, 3 = third person, abl = ablative, abl = ablative, acc = accusative, dat = dative, fnmlz = factive nominalizer, gen = genitive, neg = negative, nom = nominative, pl = plural, poss = possessive, prog = progressive, pst = past, sg = singular.
2 Generalization 1: Relativized case opacity

Crucial contrast: simplex pronouns vs Default-Triggering Nominals.
(see Paparounas and Akkuş 2020; cf. Ince 2008; Kornfilt 2003, 2007; Satık 2020)

DTNs:
- Anaphors (kendi- 'self', birbir- 'each other')
- Adnominal pronouns (biz Türkler 'we Turks')
- 'Partitives' (iki-miz 'two-1PL.POSS')
- Multi-plural pronouns (biz-ler 'we-pl')
- Coordinate pronouns (biz ve Leyla 'we and Leyla')

When in the subject position of a nominalized clause, pronouns agree, and DTNs normally do not:

(2) Pronoun – Nominalized clause
Kemal [ biz-im oraya git-tig- { imiz / *in } ]-i san-di-Ø.
Kemal we-gen there go-FNMLZ-1PL.POSS 3SG.POSS -ACC think-PST-3SG
'Kemal thought that we went there.'

(3) DTN – Nominalized clause
Kemal [ biz-ler-in oraya git-tig- { *imiz / in } ]-i san-di-Ø.
Kemal we-pl-gen there go-FNMLZ-1PL.POSS 3SG.POSS -ACC think-PST-3SG
'Kemal thought that we went there.'

The culprit for this asymmetry is the genitive case.

→ Striking evidence for this fact comes from an asymmetry between argument and adjunct nominalized clauses.

Kornfilt (2003): the subjects of factive nominalized clauses must be NOM if the clause is an adjunct.

(4) a. Ben [ Ali-*(nin) cam-1 kır-diğ-1 zaman ]-1 bil-iyor-du-m.
I Ali-gen glass-ACC break-FNMLZ-3SG.POSS time -ACC know-PROG-PST-1SG
'I knew when Ali broke the glass.' (argument)

I Ali glass-ACC break-FNMLZ-3SG.POSS time truth-ACC know-PROG-PST-1SG
'I knew the truth when Ali broke the glass.' (Aygen 2007: 2) (adjunct)

When DTN subjects of nominalized clauses are NOM, they trigger full agreement.

(5) a. [ [ Biz-(*im) yemek pişir-diğ-imiz ]-den dolayı ] konser-e we food cook-FNMLZ-1PL.POSS -ABL because concert-DAT
gid-e-me-di-m.
go-ABIL-NEG-PST-1SG
'Because we cooked, I was unable to go to the concert.' (Kornfilt 2003: 151)

b. [ [ Biz-ler-(*in) yemek pişir-diğ-imiz ]-den dolayı ] konser-e we-pl food cook-FNMLZ-1PL.POSS -ABL because concert-DAT
gid-e-me-di-m.
go-ABIL-NEG-PST-1SG
'Because we cooked, I was unable to go to the concert.'
3 Generalization 2: Binding enables agreement

A striking contrast: when a gen-marked DTN binds an object reciprocal, it can agree with the verb.

(6) Ali [ biz-ler-in kitab-ı sev-diğ- { *imiz / in } ]-i söyle-di-Ø.
    Ali    we-pl-gen book-acc like-fnmlz- 1pl.poss 3sg.poss -acc say-pst-3sg
    'Ali said that we like the book.'

(7) Ali [ biz-ler-in birbir-imiz-i sev-diğ- { imiz / in } ]-i söyle-di-Ø.
    Ali    we-pl-gen each.other-1pl.poss-acc like-fnmlz- 1pl 3sg -acc say-pst-3sg
    'Ali said that we like each other.'

The same pattern obtains with reflexives, and with bound pronouns:

(8) Ali [ biz-ler-in kendi-miz-i sev-diğ- { imiz / in } ]-i söyle-di-Ø.
    Ali    we-pl-gen self-1pl.poss-acc like-fnmlz- 1pl 3sg -acc say-pst-3sg
    'Ali said that we like ourselves.'

(9) Ali [ biz-ler-in tez-ler-imiz-i bitir-diğ- { imiz / in } ]-i söyle-di-Ø.
    Ali    we-pl-gen thesis-pl.1p.poss-acc finish-fnmlz- 1pl 3sg -acc say-pst-3sg
    'Ali said that we finished our theses.' (Jaklin Kornfilt, p.c.)

This interaction is local:

(10) Leyla [ [ bölüm başkan-ının tez-ler-imiz-i oku-duğ-u ]-na biz-ler-in
    Leyla    department chair-gen thesis-pl.1p.poss-acc read-fnmlz.poss -dat we-pl-gen
    mutlu ol-duğ-u / *ol-duğ-umuz ]-u söyle-di-Ø.
    happy be-fnmlz-3sg.poss be-fnmlz-1pl.poss ]-acc say-pst-3sg
    'Leyla said that we were happy that the department chair read our theses.'

Generalization 2: Binding enables agreement
A gen-marked DTN can only agree if it locally binds an anaphor or bound pronoun.
4 Analysis: binding as local phi-feature transmission

Step 1: Voice probes minimal pronoun (cf. Ahn 2015; Murphy and Meyase 2020).

Step 2: Feature-sharing relation established (Frampston and Gutmann 2000); Voice probes spec, VoiceP (Béjar and Řezač 2009).

Step 3: Shared feature valued, with features percolating to VoiceP; DTN subject raises to receive GEN.

Step 4: A nominal probe D attempts and fails to Agree with the genitive-marked DTN (Preminger 2011). If no further probing occurs, D is empty at PF and receives default 3sg.

5 Conclusion

- Turkish DTNs are opaque for agreement when marked with gen...
- ...unless they bind, in which case they can agree.
- Implementation: Binding is local phi-feature transmission taking place before gen assignment.
- At least in this case, binding and agreement seem to go hand-in-hand.
References


Murphy, Andrew, and Savio Meyase. 2020. "Licensing and Anaphora in Tenyidie".


