On Nominalizers in Turkish Embedded Clauses

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The frequently used Turkish subordinate inflectional (nominalizer) morphemes -mA/-mAK, -DIK/-(y)AcAK, and -(y)Iş differ in their distributional and semantic properties.

-mA and -mAK clauses are in complementary distribution inside VPs, and they have the same interpretation. The sentences in (1) show that, as complements of VPs, their distribution is determined by the coreferentiality of the main subject and the embedded subject; -mAK is used when they are coreferential (1a), and -mA is used when they are not (1b) (i.e., -mAK when the embedded subject is a PRO, -mA when it needs case (small pro, DP)).

(1) a. Ben [_____ oyun oyna-**mak**] istiyorum.

   "I want to play video games."

   b. Ben [Ahmet'in oyun oyna-**ma-**sı-]nı istiyorum.

   "I want Ahmet to play video games."

Kural (1998) claims that i) -DIK consists of the past tense marker -DI and the complementizer -K, ii) -(y)AcAK is actually -(y)AcAKK, consisting of the future marker and the complementizer -K (the same -Ks in -mAK above). Kelepir (2007), citing Kural (1998), agrees that -DIK is a complex marker and the -K part is a complementizer, but argues that -DI is a marker that is underspecified for tense. Her work does not involve -(y)AcAK; this study postulates that -DIK has either past or present (non-future) reference and -(y)AcAK has future reference. (a) readings of (2) and (3) are the result of past -DIK, whereas the (b) readings, in which the embedded event and the main event are simultaneous, are the result of its present tense interpretation. (4) shows how -(y)AcAK and -(y)AcAKK are similar.

(2) Ayşe [Ahmet'in uyu-**duğ**-u-]nu sanıyor.   (Kural 1998:410)

   a. "Ayşe thinks that Ahmet slept."

   b. "Ayşe thinks that Ahmet is sleeping."

(3) Ayşe [Ahmet'in uyu-**duğ**-u-]nu anladı.   (Kural 1998:411)

   a. "Ayşe realized that Ahmet had slept."

b. "Ayşe realized that Ahmet was sleeping."

(4) a. Mehmet koş-**acak**.

"Mehmet will run."

b. Ahmet [Mehmet'in koş-**acağ-**ı-]nı biliyor.

"Ahmet knows that Mehmet will run."

Özsoy (1999:70-71) proposes a three-way categorization of main verbs with respect to the nominalizer they assign to their complement verbs: i) -DIK/-(y)AcAK, ii) -mA/-mAK, iii) both -DIK/-(y)AcAK and -mA/-mAK. Following this categorization and Kural (1998), -mA/-mAK and -(y)Iş, -mA/-mAK and -DIK/-(y)AcAK, -DIK/-(y)AcAK and -(y)Iş are contrasted.

This study aims to show, through these contrasts and other important ones like -mA - [nasıl …-DIK], […-(y)Ip …-mA-mA] - […-(y)Ip …-mA-(y)AcAK], and structures like predicative adjectives and sentential subjects/predicates, that the main functions of the nominalizers in question is as follows: i) **-mA/-mAK:** nonfactivity, ii) **-DIK/-(y)AcAK:** factivity, iii) **-(y)Iş:** manner (event presupposition), and argues that the contexts in which these nominalizers occur play a crucial role as to what they mean.