

Information Structure in Turkish Nominal Phrases

Some researchers argue that similar to CP, the DP also possesses information structure with layers such as Topic and Focus (Giusti 1996, Aboh 2004, Haegeman 2004, among others), along the lines of Rizzi (1997). I will examine whether Turkish noun phrases possess such kind of information structure and argue that Turkish has Topic and Focus phrases above the DP and this projection displays movement properties.

Some constituents can appear before demonstratives in Turkish. In (1) when the order of the genitive-marked DP and the demonstrative is swapped, the interpretations change:

- (1) a. *şu Burak-ın şapka-sı* b. *Burak-ın ŞU şapka-sı*
that Burak-GEN hat-POSS.3SG Burak-GEN that hat-POSS.3SG
“that hat of Burak” “that hat of Burak’s hats”

(1a) implies that Burak might have only one hat; it has no implication regarding Burak’s possession of other hats. (1b), however, entails that Burak has more than one hat. In addition, the demonstrative *şu* receives focus. Thus, I argue that (1b) is obtained through information structure-related movement. Above the DP layer, there are TopP and FocP projections in this order. The demonstrative *şu* moves into FocP, and the DP *Burak-ın* moves into TopP.

The same interpretation is obtained with respect to the position of an adjectival phrase. The phrases below also have different interpretations:

- (2) a. *şu kırmızı şapka* b. *kırmızı ŞU şapka*
that red hat red that hat
“that red hat” “that red hat among red hats”

While (2a) merely points to a red hat, (2b) entails that there is more than one red hat and points to a specific one among the set of red hats. The demonstrative *şu* in (2b) is focused and moves to FocP, while the adjective *kırmızı* moves into TopP.

As for the interaction between CP-level and DP-level information structure, both domains project their own topic and focus phrases.

- (3) *Ben_{TOP} [kırmızı_{TOP} ŞU_{FOC} elbise-yi] ÇOK_{FOC} beğen-di-m.*
I red that dress-ACC a.lot like-PAST-1SG
“I liked THAT red dress MUCH”

The bracketed DP above hosts its own topic and focus, and the CP hosts *ben* in its TopP and *çok* in its FocP. This is plausible in that the CP and DP comprise phase domains, so each can host its own functional projections.

Overall, I will show that Turkish nominal phrases bear discourse-related functional categories in its left periphery, which is composed of TopP and FocP above the DP. The order alternations result from relevant information structure reflected on surface syntax.

Key words: information structure, the Turkish DP, left periphery, topic phrase, focus phrase

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