

EXISTENTIAL -LAR IN TURKISH

Kadernur Akpınar

Boğaziçi University

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Abstract

The aim of this paper is to investigate the reasons behind the ungrammaticality of the negative sentences with bare plurals in object position in Turkish (eg: *Ben marketten çikolata-lar almadım / I-NOM market-ABL chocolate-lAr buy-NEG-PST-1PRS.SG / Intended Reading: “I did not buy different types of chocolate from the market”) and analyze their internal structures based on the minimalist program (Chomsky, 1993) and the morphosyntactic features in Adger (2003). I claim that there are two reasons behind the ungrammaticality of these types of sentences with bare plurals: syntactic and semantic. The syntactic reason is that Turkish plural -lAr has an existential feature in it which has to be checked by the functional head “Affirmative Phrase”, which I propose in this paper for Turkish, or Determiner Phrase”, in addition its other features such as additive and associative as stated in previous accounts (Lewis 2000, Göksel&Kerslake 2005, Görgülü 2011, Ketrez, 2003). However; in negative sentences with bare plurals, -lAr cannot be checked as there is neither D nor Aff head in the sentence. The semantic reason comes from the scopal relations. As bare plurals do not have any D in them and construct a complex predicate with V-head as stated in Ketrez (2003), and since bare plurals cannot take scope over negation (Keleş, 2001), this causes an intervention effect between negation and existential operator -lAr in Turkish. This is avoided only when there is a DP which blocks the intervention effect between two operators. However; as the scope of this paper is syntactic features, semantic reason will not be mentioned in that much details in this paper.

1. Introduction

The plural marking across languages have different exponents on the surface structure. Turkish, being an agglutinative language, uses the suffix -lAr to mark plurality of the nouns. In Lewis (2000) and Göksel and Kerslake (2005), the suffix -lAr is used to mark plural in Turkish as a number feature (eg: kitap-lAr “books”), as a group denoting feature with proper names (eg: Mehmet’ler “Mehmet and his family”) along with other denotations. However, this paper analyzes -lAr with respect to its feature of “existentiality” on a sentence basis. The negative sentences with bare plurals such as in (1) are ungrammatical and I claim that this results from the fact that the suffix -lar has an existential feature in it and it cannot be checked under the negation.

(1) a. *Ben marketten çikolata-lar almadım.

I-NOM market-ABL chocolate-lAr buy-NEG-PST-1PRS.SG

Intended Reading: “I did not buy different types of chocolate from the market”

b. *Ben sokakta kedi-ler görmedim.

I-NOM street-LOC cat-lAr see-NEG-PST-1PRS.SG

Intended reading: “I did not see various cats on the street”

c. *Ali Prag’da müze-ler gezmedi.

Ali-NOM Prag-LOC museum-lAr visit-NEG-PST-3PRS.SG

Intended Reading: “Ali did not visit various museums in Prag”

d. *Ayşe pazarda çanta-lar taşımadı.

Ayşe-NOM bazaar-LOC bag-lAr carry-NEG-PST-3PRS.SG

Intended Reading: “Ayşe did not carry various bags in bazaar”

On the other hand, these sentences are plausible in Turkish when they are not negated. For instance, the sentence in (2) is totally grammatical in Turkish.

(2) Ben marketten çikolatalar aldım.

I-NOM market-ABL chocolate-lAr buy-PST-1PRS.SG

“I bought lots of chocolate from the market”

As seen in (2), this example and other examples in (1) used with affirmative sentences are acceptable in Turkish. This demonstrates that negation causes a problem. On the other hand, bare singular objects are plausible with negation as in (3)

(3) Ben marketten çikolata almadım.

I-NOM market-ABL chocolate buy-NEG-PST-1PRS.SG

“I did not buy any chocolate from the market”

The fact that the bare NP without -lAr is accepted under the negation shows that -lAr also has a problem with the negation. Hence, I claim that there is a reciprocal problem between bare plural nouns as objects and negation in Turkish. Only under the situations where noun has an

overtly marked accusative case and where there is an adjective “böyle” preceding bare plurals, it is acceptable to use -lAr and negation together as in (4)

(4) Ben marketten çikolataları almadım.

I-NOM market-ABL chocolate-lAr-ACC buy-NEG-PST-1PRS.SG

“I did not buy the chocolate from the market”

Considering the ungrammaticality of the bare plurals with negation and plausible modified sentences, the organization of the paper will be as follows. In section 2, brief literature review related to the plurals in Turkish will be mentioned so as to be used in the following sections as representation models. In section 3, the argument-hood of the bare plurals and bare singulars will be compared with respect to Chierchia’s Typology (1998) and noun incorporation in Öztürk (2005). In section 4, the bare plurals will be analysed in relation to the semantics and syntax of negation as in Kelepir (2001). In section 5, Affirmative Phrase will be proposed for Turkish in order to account for the -lAr and negation contrast and section 6 will be the conclusion of this paper.

2. Literature Review: Two Models to Explain -lAr in Turkish

The suffix -lAr in Turkish has been analysed by many linguists. In this part, two of these analyses that model the syntactic representation of -lAr will be mentioned. First, Görgülü’s (2011) analysis of two types of plurals will be stated than Ketrez’s (2003) semantico-syntactic analysis will be mentioned which will be used in order to explain the problem discussed in this paper.

Görgülü (2011) analyzes the suffix -lAr in terms of its semantic and syntactic properties. He (2011) claims that the semantic and syntactic properties of plural -lAr and associative -lAr are different and they have different representations as in (5.a) and (5.b)

(5) a. Teyzeler-im çıktı.

aunt-PL.1SG leave-PST

“ i. My aunts left together” (collective)

“ ii. My aunts left at different times” (distributive)

b. Teyzemler çıktı.

“ i. My aunt and her family / friends / associates left”

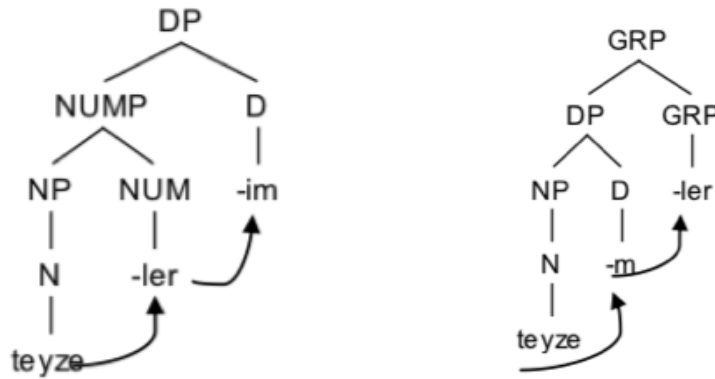
“ ii. My aunt and her family / friends / associates left together (collective)”

- “ iii. *My aunts and her family / friends / associates left at different times
(distributive)”

[Görgülü, 2011: 7]

As seen in the examples above, the distributive reading is not possible with the associative -lAr in (5.b) yet it is possible in additive one in (5.a). Hence, their representations according to Görgülü (2011) are as follows in (6). This paper focuses on the additive -lAr in Turkish in Görgülü’s (2011) terms and associative ones will not be analyzed in detail.

(6)



On the other hand, Ketrez (2003) has a different syntatico-semantic analysis of the suffix -lAr in Turkish, which will be in the scope of this paper. According to Ketrez (2003), Turkish plural should be under the functional head “Classifier Phrase (ClP) in Turkish rather than “Number Phrase (NumP) and there are three types of plurality in Turkish as in (7)

(7) a. Multiple Singularities (MS) (refers to the number of the singular items)

(i) Ayşe kitaplar-ı okudu.

Ayşe-NOM book-lAr.ACC read-PST

“Ayşe read the books”

b. Multiple Events (ME) (refers to the number of the event taking place)

(ii) Ayşe Kuran’lar okudu.

Ayşe-NOM Koran-lAr read-PSt

“Ayşe read the Koran multiple times”

c. Multiple Types (refer to the types of objects that are different)

(iii) Ayşe kitaplar okudu.

Ayşe-NOM book-IAR read-PST
“Ayşe read different types of books”

The sentence in (iii) actually is ambiguous between multiple types and events reading, hence it can have different representations in accordance with the context (Ketrez, 2003). Moreover, she (2003) proposes representations of these 3 types in her paper as in (8)

(8) MS reading [DP [NumP [CIP [NP]-IA#] -IAR]]

ME reading [CIP [NP]-IAR]

MT reading [DP [CIP [NP] -IAR]]

[Ketrez 2003: 4]

The bare plurals, discussed in this paper, will be handled in parallel with Ketrez’s (2003) classification of the plural types. The ones in (1) refer to both ME and MT reading according to Ketrez (2003) as they do not have any overt case marker as in MS reading. In the following section, the argument-hood of them will be analyzed with respect to this analysis of Ketrez (2003).

3. Argument-hood of Bare Plurals and Bare Singulars in Object Position

NPs in languages need to meet certain criteria in order to become an argument in a sentence. As mentioned in Öztürk (2005), for an NP to become an argument; it needs to either have functional Determiner Phrase or case assignment. In relation to DPs While Longobardi (1994) and Stowell (1991) argues for a universal DP, where they claim that the NPs should be DPs in order to become arguments, Chierchia (1998) argues that languages show different tendencies towards the denotation of their NPs and he (1998) argues against the universality of the DPs across languages. As mentioned in Öztürk (2005), Chierchia (1998) proposes a Nominal Mapping Parameter as in (9)

(9) In Chierchia (1998), the Nominal Mapping Parameter argues that in languages like Chinese, NPs are marked as [+arg, -pred] denoting names of kinds; i.e. they are inherently of type e. They can occur in argument positions without resort to determiners. In languages like Romance, NPs are [-arg, +pred], that is, they are of type <e,t>, hence they cannot occur as arguments unless they are embedded under a D

projection. In the third category are languages like Germanic and Slavic, in which NPs are of type [+arg, +pred].

[Taken from Öztürk 2005: 8]

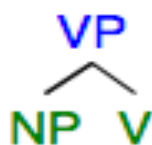
However; as stated in Öztürk (2005), Turkish is a language which does not match with any of the classifications in Chierchia's (1998) Typology as it is a language where bare nouns can occur in argument positions, overt plural morphology is available and there are no classifiers. Hence, Öztürk (2005) proposes that Turkish is a language where case-assignment is also responsible for the referentiality of the NP unlike English where referentiality is provided by determiners.

What about the bare nouns in Turkish as in (10) then? They do not have any case-marking in Turkish, but they still occupy the object position as an argument.

- (10) a. Ali bakkaldan çikolata aldı.
Ali-NOM market-ABL chocolate buy-PST
“Ali bought some chocolate from the market”
- b. Ali bakkaldan çikolatalar aldı.
Ali-NOM market-ABL chocolate-PL buy-PST
“Ali bought different types of chocolate from the market”
“Ali bought some chocolate from the market for multiple times”

[Interpretations adapted from Ketrez:2003]

Unlike Kornfilt (1995) and others, who proposes head incorporation for these structures, Öztürk (2009), proposes pseudo incorporation for the bare nouns in Turkish as in Massam (2001) who claims that bare nouns in these constructions should be bare NPs without any functional D-head. Öztürk (2009) suggests the following structure for bare nouns in Turkish in (11) as a complex predicate.

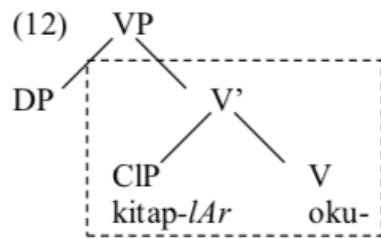


(11)

Although she (2009) states evidences against the argument-hood of these bare nouns in Turkish, she adds that they take weak case in situ and has thematic role unlike light verb constructions in Turkish which can take other objects unlike verbs with bare NPs. (See Öztürk 2009 for details).

Moreover, for the sentences as in (10.b.), with object bare plurals, Ketrez (2003) proposes the following structure which is parallel to Öztürk's (2009) pseudo incorporation account for Turkish as in (12)

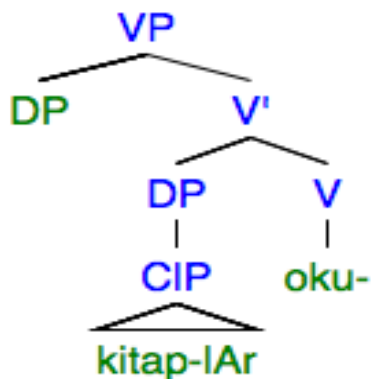
(12)



[Taken from Ketrez ME plural 2003: 12]

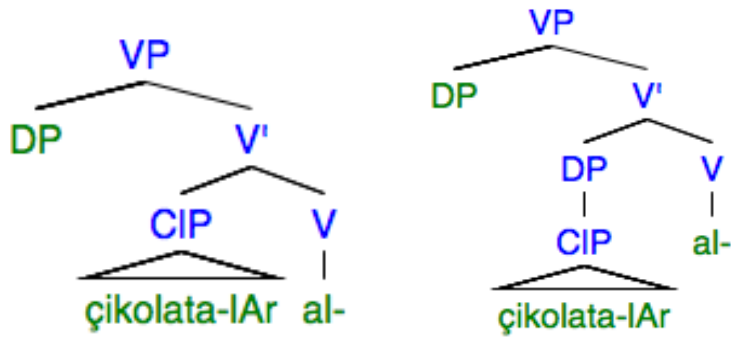
Ketrez (2003) on the other hand proposes a complex predicate headed by CIP as mentioned in the earlier section as she (2003) takes the suffix -lAr as a classifier head. However; the construction is in parallel with the one in (11) proposed by Öztürk (2009) as both of them construct a complex predicate. The representation above refers to the Multiple Events Reading in Ketrez's (2003) account. However; for the Multiple Types Reading, she proposes a different representation with DP in it as in (13).

(13)



The representation of bare plural in (10) would be as follows according to Ketrez (2003), which is ambiguous between ME and MT reading as follows in (14)

(14)



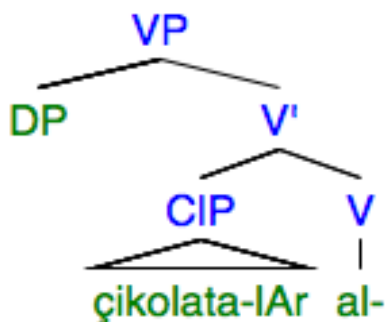
[Multiple Events]

[Multiple Types]

[Adapted from Ketrez 2003]

However; I claim that the ME reading in Ketrez (2003) is restricted to the proper nouns in object position in Turkish as in (7.b). In my view, the sentence in (10.b) is not ambiguous between two readings, but it only refers to the multiple types reading. Hence, the true representation of the multiple types reading (Ketrez, 2003) in Turkish should be the same as the one in multiple events reading, without DP as in (15).

(15)



[Multiple Types Reading, Adapted from Ketrez: 2003]

The evidence to this comes from the negation in my account which will be the focus of the following section in this paper. If multiple types reading had DP in it, it would be acceptable in (16) according to my account, however; it is not the case.

- (16) Ali marketten çikolatalar almadı.
Ali-NOM market-ABL chocolate-1Ar buy-NEG-PST
Intended Reading: “Ali did not buy various chocolate from the market”

In Turkish, the sentence in (16), sounds not plausible even with the type reading in it. Hence, type reading should not include any DP over it. If it had a DP, the negation would not be able to take scope over the existential -1Ar and it would be grammatical. In the following section, the relation between bare plurals and negation will be handled in more detail.

In short, in this section, I claim that, bare plurals also constitute a pseudo incorporation as in Öztürk (2009)’s account and headed by CIP as in Ketrez (2003) they form a complex predicate with V-head in Turkish with type-meaning and existential feature in it.

4. Negation and Existential -1Ar: Scope Relation

Negation has been analyzed in relation to the scope in previous research. In Kelepir (2001), Turkish was stated as scope rigid language (Zidani-Eroğlu 1997, Göksel 1997, Aygen-Tosun 1999 and others), except for the cases where indefinites are marked with accusative as in (17)

- (17) Her öğrenci bir kitab-ı okudu.
Every student a book-ACC read-PST
“Every student read a book”

According to Kelepir (2001), this sentence is ambiguous between two readings as follows:

- (i) There is a list of books and every student x read a book y from the list
- (ii) There is one book such that every student read that book.

[Kelepir 2001: 84]

However; the zero-marked indefinite counter-part of this sentence is not ambiguous between two readings, hence; as mentioned in Kelepir (2001) it behaves in a scope-rigid way, meaning the surface and LF reading are identical to each other as in (18).

- (18) Her öğrenci bir kitap okudu
 Every student a book read-PST
 “Every student read a book”. [Kelepir 2001: 83]

In (18) the only reading possible is that every student probably read a different book from the list. When it comes to the negation, it is taken as an operator that affects scopal relations in Kelepir (2001) and I agree with her on that issue. Kelepir (2001) gives the following examples in (19) in relation to the negation and indefinites.

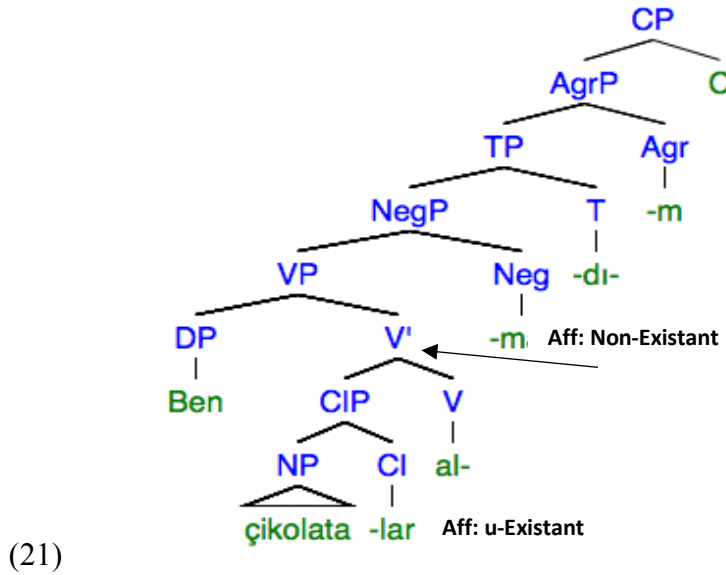
- (19) a. Hasan Ali’ye bir hediye al-ma-dı.
 Hasan-NOM Ali-DAT a present buy-NEG-PST
 “Hasan did not buy Ali a present” [NEG>INDEF] → NARROW SCOPE
- b. Hasan bir ödevi yapmadı.
 Hasan-NOM a homework-ACC do-NEG-PST
 “Hasan did not do any homework” [NEG>INDEF] → NARROW SCOPE
 “Hasan did not do one of the homework” [INDEF>NEG] → WIDE SCOPE

In (19.a) the sentence is a bare singular without accusative marker and has an indefinite modifier and according to Kelepir (2001), it can only take narrow scope, meaning surface-structure reading. On the other hand, the one in (19.b) with accusative-marking can have both narrow and wide scope reading as it has the accusative case in it. Our data in (10) has similar implications to Kelepir’s (2001) analysis as in (20)

- (20) *Ben çikolatalar al-ma-dım
 *I-NOM chocolate-lAr buy-NEG-PST-1PRS.SG
 Intended Reading: “I did not buy different types of chocolate”

According to Kelepir’s (2001) analysis, this sentence only has narrow scope reading. In our data, the relation is between -lAr and negation which is different from Kelepir (2001). Hence, I argue that -lAr as a suffix with existential feature in it does not accept to be under the scope of the negation in Turkish and this causes the ungrammaticality of the bare plurals in object position with negation. Since -lAr presupposes the existence of the object it attaches to,

negation of it causes the uninterpretability of these sentences at LF. This can also be explained by Linebarger's (1980) "Immediate Scope Constraint" where she claims that there cannot be any quantificational element between NPI and negation at LF since any quantificational element blocks the licensing of NPI as mentioned in Kelepir (2001). In our sentence in (20), there is a similar intervening effect where negation operator blocks the presupposition of existence brought by -lAr operator in Turkish by not allowing taking wide scope. A possible representation of the sentence in (20) would be as follows in (21).



As seen in (21), the uninterpretable existant feature of -lAr is not met by any functional head in this tree. Also, negation as an operator with non-existant feature in it operates over V' and since in pseudo incorporation (Öztürk, 2009) the bare object and V constitutes a complex predicate, the operator -lAr's presupposition of existant is blocked by the negation operator. Hence, this sentence becomes uninterpretable at LF, because;

- lAr presupposes the existence of the NP it attaches to, and it brings [uExistant] feature¹ which is not met in the structure.
- Negation reverses the truth condition of the predicate it c-commands, as bare plurals constitute complex verbs, -lAr being in the bare plural is affected by the operation of the negation which makes it non-existant. As -lAr is an existential operator, the negation causes an intervention effect as mentioned in Kelepir (2001).²

¹ These features are adapted from Adger (2003) and I claim that Turkish -lAr has an existential feature, like other features in Adger (2003) (eg: case feature)

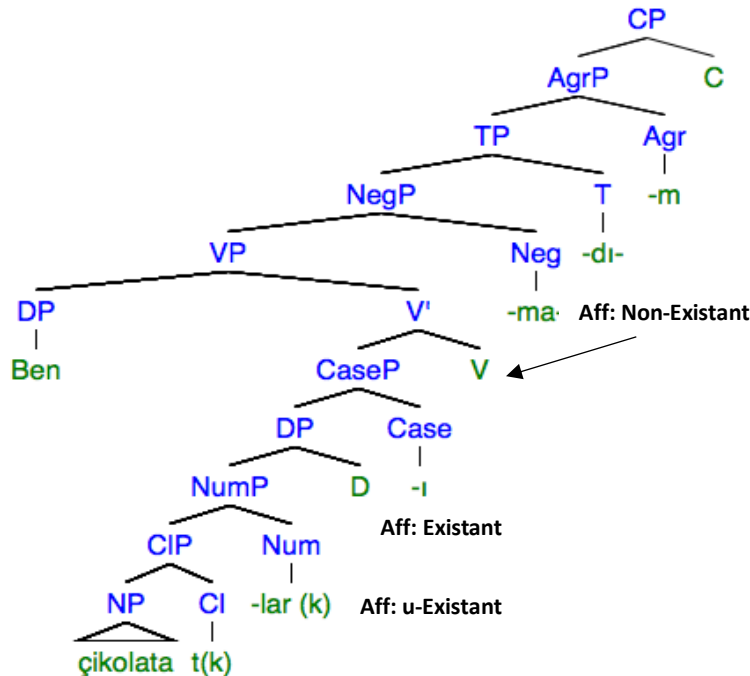
² As the focus of this paper is on syntactic explanations, I will not go into the details of the semantics of this operator other than scope relations.

The first explanation for the ungrammaticality of the sentence is syntactic, while the second one is more into semantics. I claim that these two reasons actually cause the uninterpretability of the data introduced in the first section of this paper. When one of these come up in a sentence, it becomes ungrammatical. The evidences in support of these two claims come from the modified version of the sentence in (20). There are two ways to make the sentence with negation operator and -lAr grammatical with small modifications. The first one is adding accusative marker to the bare plural and make it referential. As mentioned earlier in this section, in Kelepir (2001), this gives the possibility of having both narrow and wide scope reading as in (22).

- (22) Ben çikolataları almadım.
 I-NOM chocolate-lAr-ACC buy-NEG-PST-1SG
 “I did not buy the chocolate you mentioned”

In (22), the object of the sentence is not bare anymore, and as it is marked with accusative; the representation of it would be as follows in (23), in accordance with Ketrez’s (2003) MS reading.

(23)



This sentence is grammatical, because, in syntactic terms; the presupposition of existence feature brought by -lAr can be checked by the functional head D in my account. As mentioned

in Keleşir (2001), existence presupposition is protected with the accusative case in Turkish and this supports my argument that the presupposition of existence in this sentence is provided by D head, which comes with CaseP, accusative case in this sentence. This is the case only in my modified version of the representations of Ketrez (2003), where only accusative-marked plurals have DP but not the others. Moreover, in semantic terms, this is grammatical because the intervention of negation operator is blocked by DP and the existential operator -IAr can function on its own as the object in this sentence does not constitute a complex verb with V-head. Also, as stated in Keleşir (2001) this sentence have both narrow and wide scope reading as in (24)

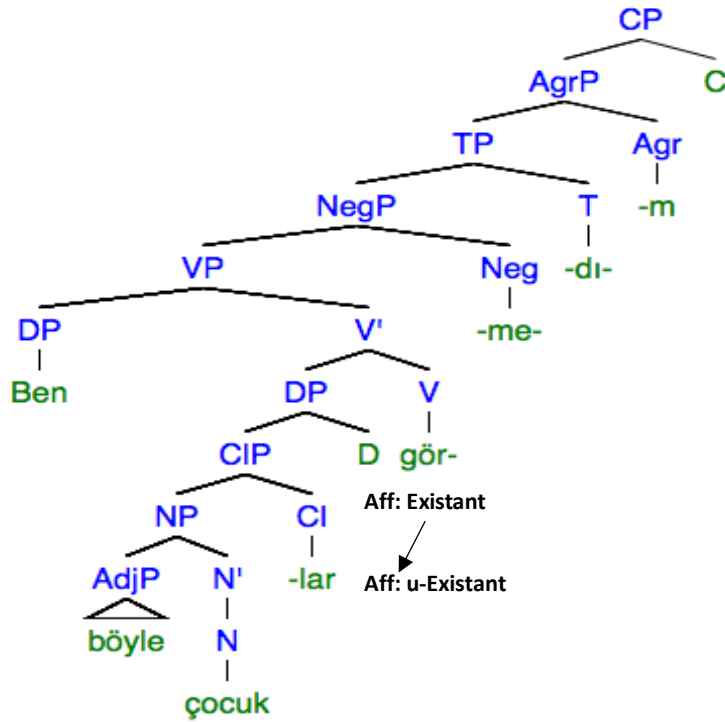
- (24) Ben çikolataları almadım.
 I-NOM chocolate-IAr-ACC buy-NEG-PST-1SG
 “I did not buy the chocolate you mentioned but I bought some still” [IAr>NEG]
 “I did not buy any chocolate” [NEG>IAr]

This shows that, -IAr operator can escape from the c-command of negation thanks to the accusative case at LF and causes ambiguity. Hence, semantic explanation also provides us with the grammaticality of the sentence discussed here.

Another way to make it grammatical is by adding “böyle” before the bare plural. The word “böyle” have been analyzed under indefinite articles as markers of similarity and otherness in Göksel&Kerslake (2005) in addition to its function as adjective and adverb. Hence, in my view, by adding “böyle” before the bare plural object, the intervention between negation and existential operator can be blocked and again the existential feature can be provided by D head in this structure as in (25) and (26). However; as Turkish is a head-final language, it would not be plausible to add D head as head-initial and put “böyle” under D head. Hence, I claim that “böyle” is under AdjP, yet it brings DP as it has a presupposition of existence in it.

- (25) Ben böyle çocuklar görmedim.
 I-NOM such kid-IAr see-NEG-PST
 “I did not see such kinds of kids”

(26)



Furthermore, I need to explain why -lar is possible with affirmative sentences in syntactic terms as I postulated that it has an uninterpretable existant feature which needs to be checked. In the next section, I will propose a null functional head Affirmative in Turkish to provide the grammaticality of bare plurals in affirmative sentences.

5. Affirmative Phrase (AffP) in Turkish

Although the focus of this paper is to account for the ungrammaticality of the sentences with bare plurals and negation in Turkish, the affirmative sentences need to be accounted for a more plausible analysis of them. In affirmative sentences, there will not be problem in relation to scope of the sentence as it does not have a quantifier or negation, yet, in my analysis; I claimed in the earlier section that the suffix -lar is an existential operator with [+existential] feature in it which needs to be checked by D-head. I claim that Turkish has a covert functional Affirmative Phrase which checks the existential feature of the bare plurals in object positions. Cross-linguistically, affirmative sentences are less marked than the negative ones, yet in Laz there is an evidence of this as stated in Emgin (2009). As mentioned in Emgin (2009), in Holisky (1991:421), in the analysis of the Laz verbal affixes, there is an affirmative particle “ko” in Laz which can be attached to a pre-verb as in (27).

(27) Ma [Amedi-k svara- zerbi na c'ar-u] **ko**-m-işk-un.

I Ahmet-ERG book-NOM fast COMP write-PAST=3sg PV-1sg-know-IMP

“I know that Ahmet wrote the book fast.”

[Taken from Holisky 1991: 455]

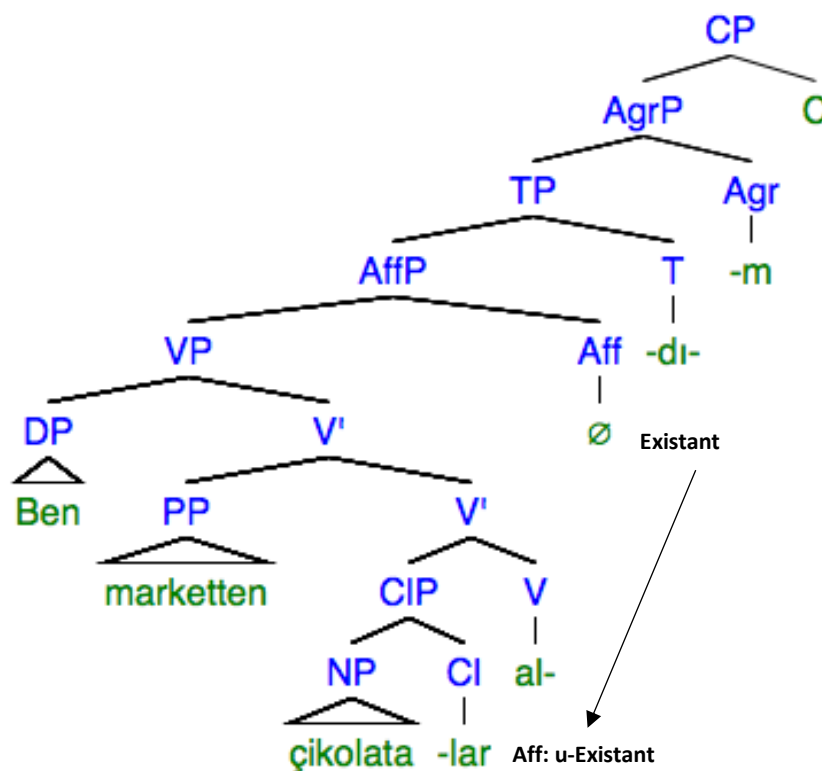
As seen in (27), Laz overtly marks the affirmative status of the sentences in certain cases (Holisky, 1991). This supports my idea that Turkish might have a null Affirmative Phrase in every non-negated sentence which checks the existential feature of -IAr if not checked by any D-head in the sentence as a last resort. Hence the representation of a sentence as in (28) would be as follows in (29).

(28) Ben marketten çikolatalar aldım.

I-NOM market-ABL chocolate-IAr buy-PST-1SG

“I bought various chocolate from the market”

(29)

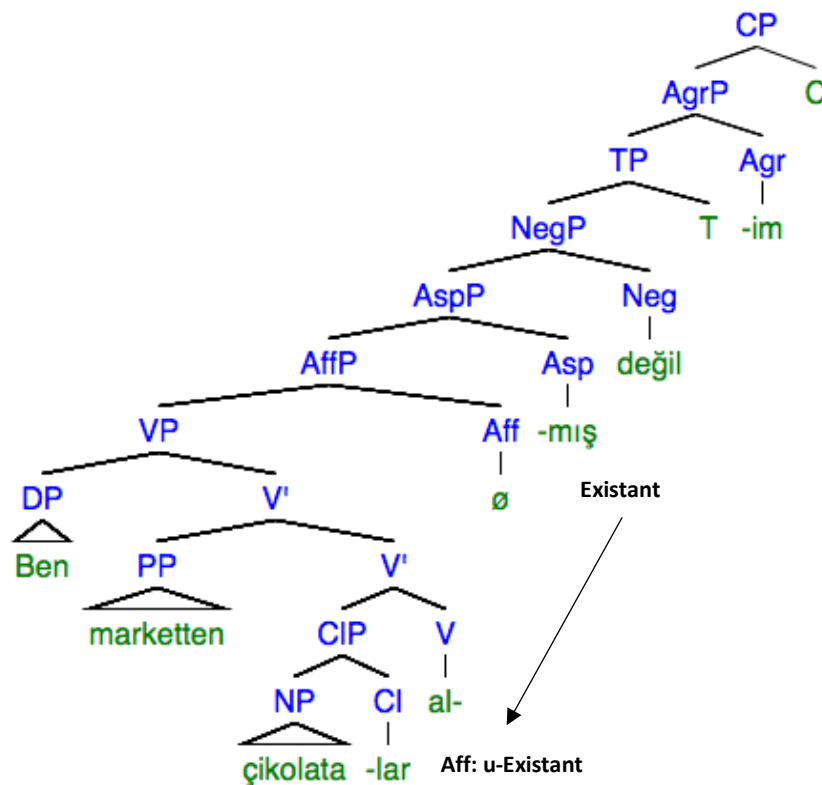


As it can be seen in (29), the functional head Aff checks the uninterpretable existant feature of the -lAr and hence this sentence becomes interpretable unlike its negated counterpart mentioned in the earlier section. Moreover, this can also explain the grammaticality of the sentence as in (30).

- (30) Ben marketten çikolatalar almış değilim
 I-NOM market-ABL chocolate-lAr buy-IMP
 “It is not that I bought various chocolate from the market”

In (30) the negation of the sentence is on different level from the negation -mA in Turkish as stated in Kelepir (2001). Değil provides us with the negation of the nominal predicates in Turkish and we can even have double negation by using both -mA suffix and değil (Kelepir, 2001). Although a sentence like in (30) is not used frequently in Turkish, according to my analysis, this sentence should be grammatical as it has to have an Affirmative Phrase in the subordinate clause which can check the existential feature of -lAr as in (31).

(31)



[Adapted from Kelepir 2001: 72]

Hence, assuming a null Affirmative Phrase in Turkish provides us with a better syntactic explanation of the existant feature of -lAr. Also, by adding AffP, we will not have any problem with scope relations in (31) as AffP makes sure that the verb in the subordinate clause is not negated but what is negated is the nominalized subordinate clause in this case. Hence, the internal structure is not accessible to “değil” and this prevents the structure from crashing unlike the negated sentences with -mA in Turkish.

6. Conclusion

In short, in this paper, I showed that -lAr in Turkish has an existential feature in it which causes it to be uninterpretable in the bare plural object position in negative sentences. The ungrammaticality of these sentences can be explained in syntactic and semantic terms. As the focus of this paper was to explain the existential feature in -lAr, the semantics part was not much detailed, hence further research might be needed for the semantic explanations of this feature. In semantic terms, I claimed that the scope relation between existential operator -lAr and negation operator -mA in Turkish causes the ungrammaticality. Since negation operator reverses the truth condition of the verb, and in bare plurals; the verb and bare plural NP constructs a complex VP, -lAr’s operation is affected by the negation operator and as a result the sentence becomes ungrammatical. Only by adding an intervening D-head, which comes with CaseP or AdjP “böyle”, can we prevent this interaction and make the sentence grammatical. When it comes to the syntactic explanation, as NegP cannot check the uninterpretable existant feature of -lAr, the sentence crashes. D-head, which comes with case in Ketrez (2003) in MS interpretation, in syntactic terms, provides us with an [+existant] feature, hence; it can be checked and the sentence does not become ungrammatical. On the other hand, this feature also must be checked in affirmative sentences which are totally grammatical in Turkish. For this feature to hold systematically, I proposed a null Affirmative Phrase in Turkish whose head checks the existential feature of the -lAr in affirmative sentences.

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