

A Ban on Adjacency in Turkish

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- **Bans on Adjacency**

- The literature is abundant with examples from a number of languages exhibiting constraints on adjacent identical objects (Haig, 2002; Kornfilt, 1986; Menn and MacWhinney, 1984; Plag, 1998; Richards, 2006).
- Constraints on adjacency might be imposed on different levels. Target objects for these constraints come in two groups: phonological (strings of sounds) or morphosyntactic (abstract features).
- Phonological: Some languages avoid creating phonologically identical sequences across morpheme boundaries (Menn and MacWhinney, 1984; Nevins, 2012; Stemberger, 1981).

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|-----|---|-----|---|
| (1) | German (Haig, 2002:1) | (2) | English (Menn and MacWhinney, 1984:524) |
| a. | Berlin- er ‘person from Berlin’ | a. | pretty- ly |
| b. | *Münster- er ‘person from Münster’ | b. | *ugly- ly |

- Morphosyntactic: Some avoid repetition of adjacent identical features/terminal nodes/phrases rather than strings (Nevins, 2012; Richards, 2006; Tat and Kornfilt, 2018).

- (3) ”Double-ing Filter” in English (Ross, 1972, as cited in Richards, 2006:17)

- a. It continued to rain.
- b. It continued raining.
- c. It is continuing to rain.
- d. *It is **continuing raining**.

- Similar phenomena is also observed in Turkish. For example, the so-called compound marker or 3SG possessive marker -sI is deleted when followed by an(other) agreement marker (Dede, 1978; Göksel 2009; Kornfilt, 1984, 1986; Kunduracı 2013). Kornfilt (1986) names this constraint as the *Stuttering Prohibition*.

- | | | | |
|-----|----|------------------------------|----------------------------|
| (4) | a. | masa lamba-sI | |
| | | desk lamp-sI | |
| | b. | bizim masa lamba-(*sI)-mız | |
| | | our desk lamp-(*sI)-POSS.1PL | (Tat and Kornfilt, 2018:1) |

In what follows, I will present some data from Turkish associative plural constructions that provide evidence for Stuttering Prohibition. I will argue that there is a ban on linearly adjacent [plural] features in Turkish regardless of their phonological identity.

Overview

1. Data: Associative plurals in Turkish
2. ‘Associative’ personal pronouns
3. Analysis: A ban on adjacent plurals
4. Discussion and Conclusion

Data

Associative plurals

- Many languages dissociate between two types of plurality: additive and associative.
 - X + PL ‘multiple Xs’
 - X + APL ‘X and his/her associates’
- Most languages mark both additive and associative plurals with the same form although there are also languages that employ exclusive markers for each (Daniel and Moravcsik, 2013).
- For instance, Hungarian has different markers for additive and associative (Dékány, 2021) whereas Turkish uses a single form, **-lAr**, to mark both (Dikmen 2021; Görgülü 2011).

(5) Hungarian (Dékány, 2021:222)

- a. János-ék
John-APL
‘John and his associates’
- b. János-ok
John-PL
‘people named John’

(6) Turkish

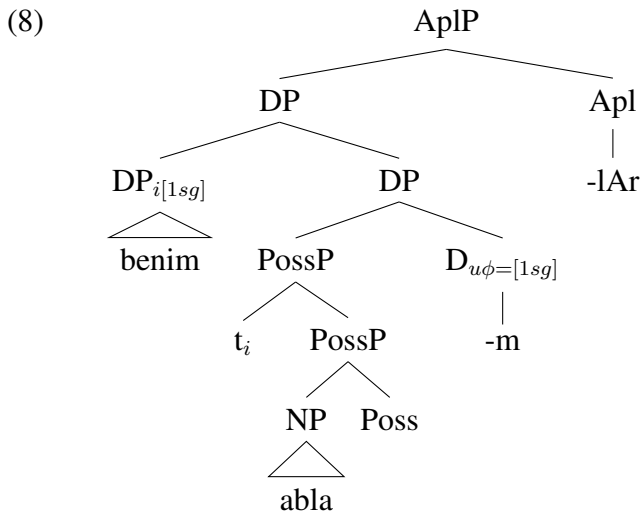
- a. Can-**lar**
Can-LAR
‘Can and his associates’
- b. Can-**lar**
sister-LAR
‘people named Can’

Turkish associatives

- As can be seen in (6a), the associative **-lAr** can attach to proper nouns.
- Besides proper nouns, APL **-lAr** can attach only to a restricted set of nouns that are kinship terms like *sister*, *uncle*, etc and that have possessive agreement marker.
- Luckily, **-lAr** is not ambiguous in these contexts, showing that its meaning depends on where it occurs in the functional sequence.

- (7) a. **abla-lar-ım**
sister-PL-POSS.1SG
'my sisters'
- b. **abla-m-lar**
sister-POSS.1SG-APL
'my sister and her associates'

- The additive (PL) meaning is observed when -lar precedes the possessive agreement suffix (7a).
- The associative plural (APL) meaning emerges when it follows the agreement marker (7b) (Görgülü 2011; but also see Dikmen 2021). Additive meaning is not possible in this position.
- **The structure of possessive associatives**
 - Given the *Mirror Principle* (Baker 1985), the data show that the additive plural and associative plural occupy different positions in the syntactic structure.
 - I assume that the possessive agreement takes place when the uninterpretable ϕ -features on D_0 are valued with the interpretable ϕ -features of the DP in its specifier via Spec-Head Agree (Chomsky, 1991; Öztürk and Taylan, 2016).
 - Following previous analyses (Turkish: Görgülü, 2011; Hungarian: Dékány, 2021), I assume that the associative plural merges with a DP whereas the additive plural is a feature under Num_0 , which combines with an NP.
 - This gives us the following structure for *benim ablamlar* 'my sister and her associates':



- **The associative paradigm(s)**
 - However, the associative plural cannot follow any agreement marker.

(9)

<i>abla</i> -POSS-LAR	SG	PL
1	<i>abla-m-lar</i>	* <i>abla-mız-lar</i>
2	<i>abla-n-lar</i>	* <i>abla-nız-lar</i>
3	* <i>abla-sı-lar</i>	* <i>abla-ları-lar</i>

What is the source of ungrammaticality? Is it phonological, morphosyntactic, or semantic?

- Fortunately, there is a dialectal variant of the associative plural morpheme: *-gil* (Göksel and Kerslake, 2005, p.59).
- *-gil* does not have additive plural function. It is an exclusive associative plural marker.
- Many speakers use the associative *-lar* and *-gil* interchangeably.

(10) **APL with proper nouns**

- a. Ahmet-**lar** geldi.
Ahmet-**APL** came
'Ahmet and his associates came.'
- b. Ahmet-**gil** geldi.
Ahmet-**APL** came
'Ahmet and his associates came.'

(11) **APL with possessive marked nouns**

- a. Ben-im baba-m-**lar** geldi.
I-GEN father-POSS.1SG-**APL** came
- b. Ben-im baba-m-**gil** geldi.
I-GEN father-POSS.1SG-**APL** came
'My father and his associates came.'

- Since *-gil* and *-lar* are phonologically unrelated, it can help us rule out phonology as the source of ungrammaticality.
- The paradigm of *-gil* differs from that of *-lar*!

(12)

<i>abla</i> -POSS-GIL	SG	PL
1	<i>abla-m-gil</i>	* <i>abla-mız-gil</i>
2	<i>abla-n-gil</i>	* <i>abla-nız-gil</i>
3	<i>abla-sı-gil</i>	?? <i>abla-ları-gil</i>

- This paradigm provides evidence that the ungrammaticality of 3SG agreeing *-lar* associatives is caused by the phonological ill-formedness of the sequence *sI + lar*.
- Further evidence for this analysis comes from speakers who have a repair mechanism to spell out this structure. Some speakers accept the form in (13), where the order between *sI+lar* is reversed so that it becomes *lar+sI = larI*, with the given intended associative meaning.

- (13) a. Merve-nin *abla-lar-ı* geldi. (*abla-lar-ı = abla-sı-gil*)
Merve-GEN sister-APL-SI came.
'Merve's sister and her associates (e.g. husband and child) came.'

- Local conclusion: 3SG associative plurals derived by *-lar* can actually be grammatically spelled out with a repair mechanism that can be simply modeled in DM (Halle and Marantz, 1993 a.o.).

Local Dislocation Rule (Embick and Noyer, 2007):

-lar must precede -sI when linearly adjacent (((X) * sI) * lar) → (X+lar+sI)

- **The remaining puzzle:** Why are plural agreeing associatives ungrammatical regardless of their form? Is it semantic or morpho-syntactic?

<i>abla</i> -POSS-APL	SG	PL
1	<i>abla</i> -m-lar / <i>abla</i> -m-gil	* <i>abla</i> -mız-lar / * <i>abla</i> -mız-gil
2	<i>abla</i> -n-lar / <i>abla</i> -n-gil	* <i>abla</i> -nız-lar / * <i>abla</i> -nız-gil
3	<i>abla</i> -lar-ı / <i>abla</i> -sı-gil	* <i>abla</i> -ları-lar / ?? <i>abla</i> -ları-gil

• **Semantics is not guilty!**

- Agreement features are assumed to be semantically uninterpretable in Minimalism (Adger 2003; Chomsky 1995, 2001; Pesetsky and Torrego 2001; Svenonius 2006).
- BUT, agreement markers reflect the existence of a possessor, which has interpretable ϕ -features that go into semantic calculation, making it difficult to rule out that semantics is the culprit.
- One way to rule out semantic incompatibility would be to investigate associative plurals that have a possessor but do not agree with it. This would keep all the interpretable features intact by dispensing with only the uninterpretable agreement features.
- Öztürk and Taylan (2016, p.94) mentions relevant constructions. They discuss that although most kinship terms are inherently relational/semantically transitive, some kinship terms have “non-relational/semantically intransitive near synonym”s.
- They propose that relational nouns have an argumental possessor with which they necessarily Agree to form a genitive-possessive construction. On the other hand, they suggest that non-relational nouns have a modifier, not an argumental possessor, and they form “possessive-free genitives” without agreement.
- If we find such a pair in associative constructions, we can use it as a test ground.
- *baba* ‘father’, a relational kinship term, has a non-relational near-synonym: *peder*.

‘X’s father and his associates’	Possessor	Relational	Non-relational
1 SG	ben-im	<i>baba</i> -m-lar	<i>peder</i> -ler
2 SG	sen-in	<i>baba</i> -n-lar	<i>peder</i> -ler
3 SG	o-nun	<i>baba</i> -lar-ı	<i>peder</i> -ler
1 PL	biz-im	* <i>baba</i> -mız-lar	<i>peder</i> -ler
2 PL	siz-in	* <i>baba</i> -nız-lar	<i>peder</i> -ler
3 PL	onlar-in	* <i>baba</i> -ları-lar	<i>peder</i> -ler

- Non-relational kinship terms do not have a possessive agreement marker and they are grammatical with all possible possessors.
- Hence, the ungrammaticality of POSS.PL + APL cannot be due to its semantics.

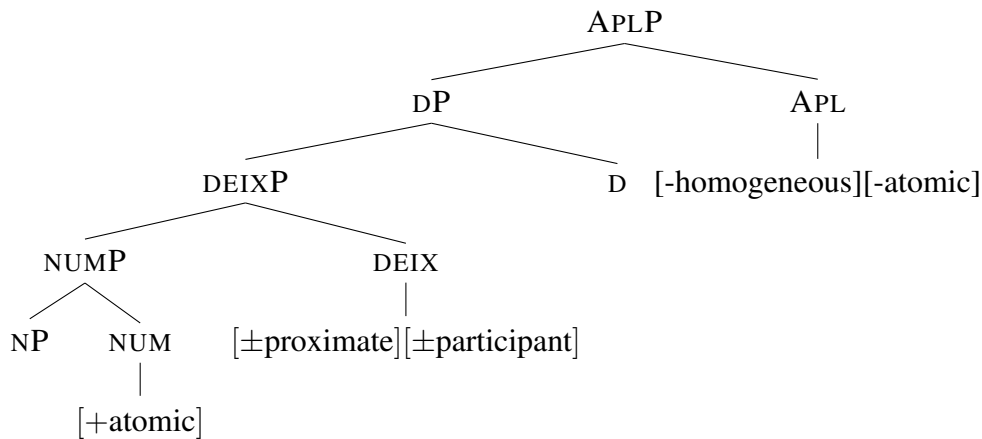
The source of defectivity in plural agreeing forms in the associative paradigm must be morphosyntactic.

Associative Plural Pronouns

- **A detour: Decomposition of “Plural” Pronouns**

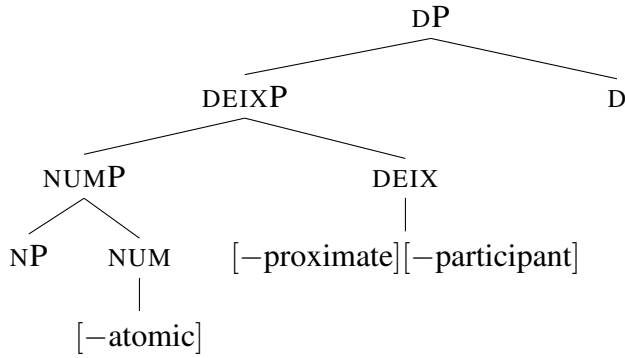
- Cross-linguistically, first and second person plural pronouns have associative meanings (Dékány, 2021; Kratzer, 2009; Vasilieva, 2005; and references therein).
- We = I + my associates You(pl) = You(sg) + your(sg) associates
- Dékány (2021) suggests that first and second person plural pronouns are derived from the relevant singular pronoun, denoted by (DP), by merging them with the associative plural feature [APL]. I adopt this analysis for plural pronouns in Turkish.
- In addition, I utilize two features under APL₀, [-homogenous] and [-atomic], to express the characterizing meaning components of associatives, as per Dékány's (2021, p.234) suggestion based on Yu'pik data in Corbett and Mithun (1996).

(15) The structure of *biz* 'we' ([+proximate]) and *siz* 'you(pl)' ([−proximate])



- There is no evidence suggesting that there should be an associative plural meaning in third person plural pronoun, too. Therefore, I will adopt an uncontroversial decomposition for *onlar* ‘they’, in which Num₀ hosts [-atomic] and there is no APL. Dékány (2021) provides this decomposition for the weak 3PL pronoun in Hungarian.

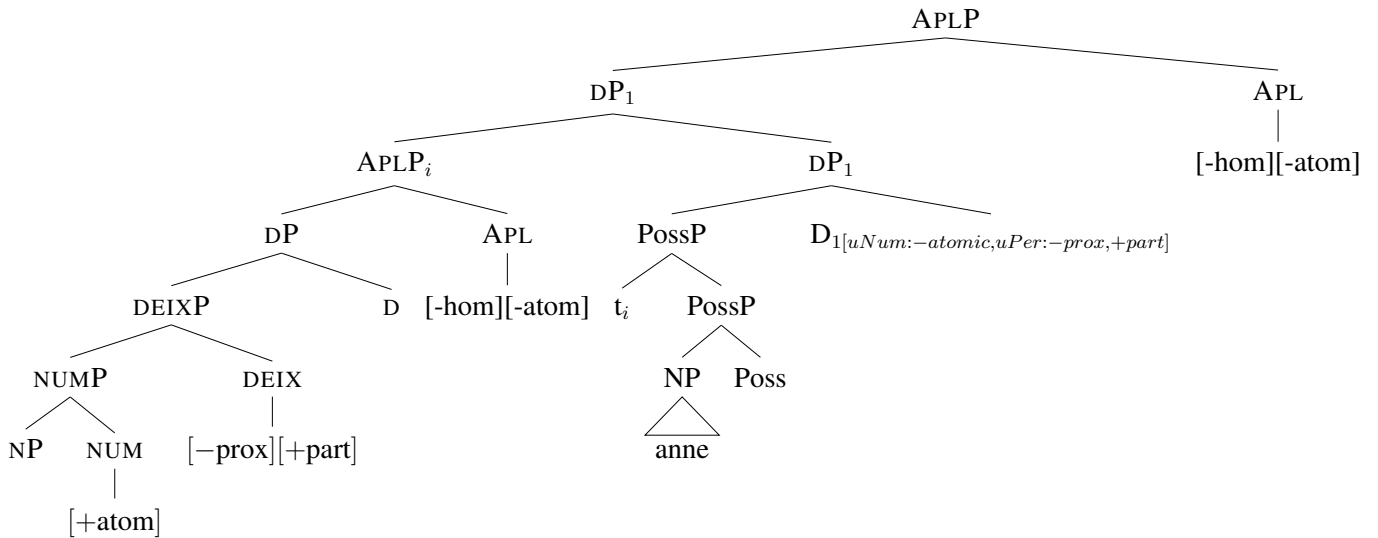
(16) The structure of *onlar* ‘they’



Analysis

• The ban

(17) The structure of **sizin annenizler* ‘your(pl) mother and her associates’ before forming complex terminals (words in DM) and linearization:



• The relevant complex terminal node (word) and linearization (Embick, 2010)

(18)
$$\begin{array}{ccccccc} (((NP & * & Poss) & * & D_1) & * & Apl) \\ \checkmark & & [+poss] & & [-atomic] & & [-hom] \\ & & & & [+part] & & [-atomic] \\ & & & & [+prox] & & \end{array}$$

• I propose that it is at this stage, the last step before vocabulary insertion, when the ungrammaticality arises. A filter/ban/prohibition on two adjacent [-atomic] features applies and the structure cannot be spelled out.

(19) A ban on linearly adjacent plural features in Turkish:
$$\begin{array}{cc} *(X_0 & * & Y_0) \\ [-atomic] & & [-atomic] \end{array}$$

Discussion and Conclusion

- The analysis is not yet complete. There are still major problems to solve such as the famous case of plural haplology in Turkish. On the surface, this process seems problematic for the current analysis.

(20) (onların) hoca-(*lar)-ları
(their) instructor-(*PL)-POS.3PL
'their instructors'

- The offered analysis is in line with previous proposals such as the *Stuttering Prohibition* (Kornfilt, 1986), which states that identical adjacent morphemes are prohibited in Turkish regardless of their phonological similarity. Tat and Kornfilt (2018) revises this rule by restricting the rule domain to M-Words.
- M-Word level haplology is concerned with adjacent abstract features in complex terminal nodes. For instance, Nevins (2012) explains the ungrammaticality of **le lo* in Spanish with a ban on adjacent [-participant] features.
- Hence, by definition, a ban on adjacent plural features is also an M-Word level haplology, which cannot be repaired.
- On the other hand, Tat and Kornfilt (2018) proposes that $\{-sI \text{ (CM/POSS.3SG)+POSS.X}\}$ is an M-Word level haplology and it can be repaired. This raises the question of why some cases of haplology in a given language can be repaired and some cannot even though they look very similar.
- This might be a result of frequency given that repairing a frequently occurring violation would be much more beneficial than repairing a very infrequent violation. Avoidance might be less costly in rare cases of haplology.
- Finally, haplology is attested in various unrelated languages, showing that it probably plays an important cognitive role (Menn and MacWhinney, 1984; Plag, 1998; Richards, 2006). Therefore, more research needs to be conducted on haplological processes in order to understand how Language works.

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