

On the quantificational force of Negative Sensitive Items in Turkish

Burak Öney

OVERVIEW Due to the logical equivalence of $\neg\exists$ and $\forall\neg$, it is not easy to determine the true nature of Negative Sensitive Items (NSIs). However, there are a number of methods to tease out existential and universal approaches: (i) investigating NSIs in conjunction with other quantifiers, (ii) checking if NSIs can be licensed in positions that are typically above negation, and (iii) comparing them with NSIs in languages known for their existential nature, such as English. By considering non-anti-additive contexts, anti-reconstruction configurations, scope islands, and other NSIs, this paper argues that Turkish NSIs are best analyzed as wide-scope universal quantifiers.

NON-ANTI-ADDITIVE CONSTRUCTIONS One test is to create a non-anti-additive context that is formed through an additional quantificational force appearing in conjunction with negation (Shimoyama 2011). The existence of the reading $\neg\forall Q\exists$ would suggest that the NSI under consideration is existential (e.g., Ladusaw 1979 for English), and the reading $\forall Q\neg$ would be evidence for the universal approach. The quantificational adverbs yielding non-anti-additive contexts are *genellikle*, *genelde* ‘usually’, *çoğu zaman* ‘most of the time’, *çoğunlukla* ‘mostly’, *neredeyse her zaman* ‘almost always’. In the presence of such adverbs, it is possible to obtain the reading where the NSI takes the widest scope, as shown in (1).

- (1) Kimse çoğunlukla ders-e katıl-maz.
anybody mostly class-DAT participate-NEG
‘For every x, it is mostly the case that x does not participate in the class.’ $\forall Q\neg$

ANTI-RECONSTRUCTION CONFIGURATIONS In Turkish, a scrambled argument cannot reconstruct if it binds a variable contained in the subject. This is illustrated in (2).

- (2) [5’ten fazla öğrenci-yi]_i [[*pro*_i hoca-sı] ödül-e *t_j* aday göster-me-di].
5-ABL more student-ACC teacher-3SG.POSS award-DAT nominate-NEG-PAST
‘More than five students_i were not nominated as a candidate for the award by his_i teacher.’
(more than 5 \neg ; * \neg \neg more than 5)

Given that the binder scrambled object is above negation at LF, once an NSI is inserted into the scrambled object, the ungrammaticality would suggest that it is existential, therefore must occur within the scope of the negation, while the grammaticality would be the evidence that it is universal and can appear above negation. The sentence in (3) shows that the latter prediction is borne out.

- (3) [Bu okul-da-ki kimse-yi]_i [[*pro*_i öğretmen-i] *t_j* döv-me-z.]
this school-LOC-ADN anybody-ACC teacher-ACC beat-NEG-AOR
‘Nobody_i in this school is beaten by his_i teacher.’

Another piece of evidence from scrambling comes from the interaction between NSIs and universal quantifiers. Keleşir (2001) shows that the universal appearing above an NSI is uninterpretable in Turkish.

- (4) *Herkes kimse-yi gör-me-di.
everybody anybody-ACC see-NEG-PAST
Intended meaning: ‘Everybody didn’t see anybody.’

Clause-initial scrambling exhibits mixed A/A’-properties in Turkish (Öztürk 2004). If the NSI in (4) is topicalized, there are two possibilities: it either reconstructs or is interpreted in its surface

position. The grammaticality of (5) indicates that it is interpreted in its derived position since if it were to reconstruct, it would be uninterpretable just like (4). Given that preposed arguments are above negation, (5) is another evidence that NSI is universal and can scope over negation.

(5) Kimseyi [herkes *t* görmedi].

‘For every *x*, it is not the case that *x* was seen by everyone.’

SCOPE ISLANDS It is well known that existential indefinites can take exceptional scope (Abusch 1994). The example in (6) shows that this also holds for Turkish.

(6) Çoğu dilbilimci önemli bir problem-i çöz-en her makale-yi
most linguist important a problem-ACC solve-REL every article-ACC
oku-muş-tur.
read-EV.COP-AOR

‘Most linguists have read every article that solves an important problem.’

(most) $\forall \rangle \exists ; \forall \rangle \exists \rangle$ most ; $\exists \rangle \forall \rangle$ most) (Özge 2011)

NSIs in English, which are known to be existential indefinites, can also take exceptional scope, as in (7).

(7) I do not think John resigned because anybody was rude to him. think $\rangle \neg \rangle \exists \rangle$ because

If one assumes NSIs in Turkish are existential indefinites, the prediction would be that they can be construed as taking exceptional scope, as well. Example in (8) shows that this is not the case.

(8) *pro* Cem’in kimse ona kötü davran-dığ-ı için istifa et-tiğ-i-ni
Cem-GEN anybody him bad treat-NOM-3SG for resign-NOM-3SG-ACC
düşün-mü-yor-um.
think-NEG-PROG-1SG

‘I do not think Cem resigned because anybody treated him badly.’ *think $\rangle \neg \rangle \exists \rangle$ because

INTERACTION OF NSIs Turkish has another type of NSI, namely *ne...ne* constructions, which roughly corresponds to the meaning of the *neither...nor* construction in English. They differ from NSIs under scrutiny in one crucial aspect: negation is optional (9).

(9) Ne Ali Ne Beste gel-(me)-di.
NE Ali NE Beste come-NEG-PAST

‘Neither Ali nor Beste came.’ (Jeretič 2023)

These expressions are analyzed as n-words which undergo agree with a covert or overt negative head above them (see Jeretič 2023). What is important for our purposes here is the interaction of NSIs. Once NSIs under scrutiny co-occur with *ne...ne*-clauses without overt negative head, only the configurations where NSIs appear above the *ne...ne*-phrases are allowed, as shown in (10).

- (10) a. *Bu yılki toplantı-ya ne Ali ne Ayşe kimse-yi davet et-miş.
this year’s meeting-DAT NE Ali NE Ayşe anybody-ACC invite do-EP.PAST
Neither Ali nor Ayşe invited anybody to this year’s meeting.’ (Şener and İşsever 2003)
- b. Bu yılki toplantı-ya kimse ne Ali’yi ne Ayşe’yi davet et-miş.
this year’s meeting-DAT anybody NE Ali-ACC NE Ayşe-ACC invite do-EP.PAST
‘Nobody invited neither Ali nor Ayşe to this year’s meeting’.

In (10a), negation must scope over n-word to license it, rendering the universal NSI trapped under negation. In (10b), on the other hand, negation can c-command the n-word without scoping over the universal NSI, hence the well-formedness. This again suggests that Turkish NSIs must be analyzed as wide-scope universals, rather than narrow-scope existentials.

References

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