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Verb-stranding VP Ellipsis in Turkish

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Aim of the Talk

- Turkish allows null object constructions, and these constructions show certain properties, suggesting the presence of ellipsis operation.
- Previous analyses argue they are derived with Argument Ellipsis, but I aim to show that Verb-stranding VP analysis is present in Turkish.

Outline

- The Problem
- Argument Drop/Argument Ellipsis vs. Verb-stranding VP Ellipsis
- Verbal Identity Requirement

Introduction

Turkish is one of the languages that allows dropping object arguments as well as subjects. A null-object construction can be seen in (1).

(1) Ayşe anne-sin-i öv-er, Fatma ise eleştir-ir

Ayşe her mother-3SG-ACC praise-AOR, Fatma however criticize-AOR.

‘Ayşe praises her mother, however Fatma criticizes.’

The sentence is ambiguous and as it can yield a strict and sloppy reading.

1) Ayşe praised her own mother and Fatma criticized Ayşe’s mother.

Strict Reading

2) Ayşe praised her own mother and Fatma criticized her own mother (Fatma’s) too.

Sloppy Reading

Introduction

Another evidence for ellipsis comes from the Quantificational and E-type readings. If the null objects are always pronominal, the E-type reading, unlike the Quantificational reading, is expected.

Şener and Takahashi (2010, ex.20)

(2) Can üç hırsız yakala-dı, Filiz ise *e* sorgula-dı.

Can three burglar catch-PAST, Filiz however *e* interrogate-PAST.

‘Can caught three burglars, however Filiz interrogated.’

(Quantificational **OK**, E-type **OK**)

- Availability of sloppy and quantificational readings suggest that the null object is not an empty pronominal, rather it involves ellipsis.

Argument Ellipsis or Verb-stranding VPE?

Şener and Takahashi (2010) argue that Turkish has AE and does not have VVPE, by employing the “adverb-including reading” test, which is shown in English in (3).

- (3) A: John washed the car carefully.

B: Bill didn't.

=Bill didn't wash the car carefully.

≠Bill didn't wash the car at all.

- If the adverb is interpreted in the second conjunct, the sentence means that the car was washed but not carefully.

Availability of Adverb Interpretations?

When the antecedent and the ellipsis sentences are conjoined with a disjunction connective (*kedo* ‘but’), the interpretation of adverbs becomes more available in Japanese (Funakoshi 2014).

Şener & Takahashi (2010):

(4) Filiz sorun-u hızla çöz-dü, Ali-yse çöz-me-di.

Filiz problem-ACC quickly solve-PAST, Ali, however, solve-NEG-PAST

‘Filiz solved the problem quickly, Ali, however, did not solve.’

With another connective:

(5) Filiz sorun-u hızla çöz-dü, ama Ali [hızla] çöz-me-di.

Filiz problem-ACC quickly solve-PAST, but Ali solve-NEG-PAST.

‘Filiz solved the problem quickly, but Ali, did not solve.’

Availability of Adverb Interpretations?

The availability of the adverb interpretation can also be facilitated if a modal is used*:

(7) Filiz sorun-u hızla çöz-ebil-di ama Ali [hızla] çöz-e-me-di.

Filiz problem-ACC quickly solve-ABIL-PAST, but Ali solve-ABIL-NEG-PAST.

‘Filiz solved the problem quickly, but Ali, did not solve.’

These show that “the adverb-including reading” is not a reliable diagnostic to test VVPE.

Landau (2018) also argues that adjunct meanings such as manner, place, and time, can easily be interpreted in the ellipsis sites due to pragmatics.

*I thank Rajesh Bhatt for suggesting this idea.

Landau (2018):

(8) Yosi afa et ha-uga lefi ha-matkon. hi hayta me'ula. Gil lo afa _____. #hi hayta mag'ila.

Yosi baked acc the-cake according the-recipe it was fabulous Gil not. #it was gross.

Combination of a creation verb and negation produces the entailment that there is no cake. To obtain the meaning that the cake was baked, the PP modifier must be interpreted in the ellipsis site. However, it is not interpreted.

(9) Ayşe keki tarife göre pişirdi. Onunki oldukça lezzetliydi. Ama Aylin pişirmedi.
Onunki oldukça kötüydü.

Lit. 'Ayşe baked the cake according to the recipe. Hers was quite delicious. But Aylin didn't. Hers was quite bad.'

Other Diagnostics?

AE is known to drop arguments independently, but not predicates. Gribanova (2013,2020) develops a diagnostic depending on this argument.

Predicates cannot be elided on their but if they are part of larger constituents, they can be elided. 10a-b illustrate object depictives in Turkish.

(10) a. Ali Mehmet'i üzgün gör-dü. Elif de Cansu'yu gör-dü.

Ali Mehmet-ACC sad see-PAST. Elif too Cansu-ACC see-PAST.

'Ali saw Mehmet sad. Elif saw Cansu too.' (≠ sad)

b. Elif Cansu'yu üzgün gör-dü. mü? Evet, gör-dü.

Elif Cansu-ACC sad see-PAST Q? Yes, see-PAST.

'Did Elif see Cansu sad? Yes, saw.' (= she saw her sad)

Other Diagnostics?

Light verbs, with *ver-* (give) and *et-* (make/do) can be checked whether VP- internal constituents can be interpreted in sentences (17) and (18). Sentences (17-18) show that VP internal constituents are not elided independently.

(11) A: Öğretmen bize ödev ver-di mi?

Teacher us assignment give-PAST Q?

‘Did the teacher give us an assignment?’

B: Evet, (öğretmen bize ödev) ver-di.

Yes, (teacher us assignment) give-PAST.

‘Yes, she did.’

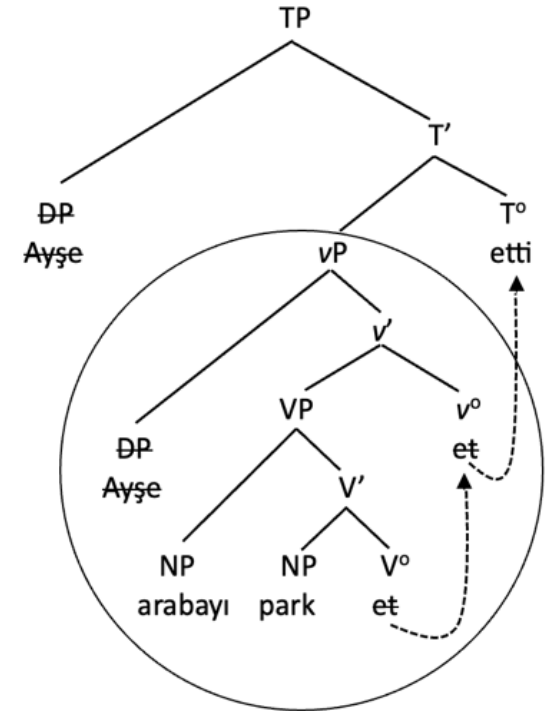
If the subject and/or the object of the verb is not elided, the answer becomes less natural and the QUD changes.

Verb-stranding VP Ellipsis

VP-internal constituents are still interpreted in the ellipsis sites. AE is known to elide arguments independently but in sentences (10a-b) and (11a-b) they are not elided independently.

VVPE can account for these sentences as only the verbs are stranded while all VP-internal arguments disappear.

This is possible because the verb moves to T and escapes deletion, while internal arguments are elided in VP.



Verbal Identity Requirement

If Turkish allows for VVPE, we also need Verbal Identity Requirement (Goldberg 2005), provided in (12), to be present as it is one of the characteristics of VVPE.

(12) The antecedent- and target-clause main Vs of VPE must be identical, minimally, in their root and derivational morphology as seen in.

Hebrew, Goldberg (2005)

(13) A: (Ha'im) Miryam hevi'a et Dvora la-xanut?
'Did Miryam bring Dvora to the store?'

B: Ken, hi hevi'a.

'Yes, she brought.'

A: *Ken, hi lakxa.

B: *'Yes, she took.'

Verbal Identity Requirement

To check whether VIR holds in Turkish:

(14) *İlk başta mutlu görün-me-di ama sonra ~~mutlu~~ hisset-ti.

First happy appear-NEG-PAST but later happy feel-PAST.

*Intended: 'First s/he did not seem happy but later she felt happy.'

(15) *Ben karpuz güzel çık-ar san-dım ama sadece ~~güzel~~ görün-müş.

I watermelon good turn out think-PAST but only good appear-EVID.

*Intended: I thought the watermelon would be tasty, but it only appeared tasty.

➤ These show that when a sentence contains a predicative adjective, mismatches in verbs are not possible.

When the verbs are the same in both conjunct (16), the second conjunct conveys the same meaning

(16) Ben karpuz güzel çıkar sandım ve (de) ~~güzel~~ çıktı.

I thought the watermelon would be tasty, and it turned out to be tasty.

VIR in Polar Questions

(17) A: Ali yemeği sıcakken yedi mi?

Ali food while it was warm eat Q?

‘Did Ali eat the food while it was warm?’

B: Yok, döktü.

No, spilled.

Intended: Ali spilled the food while it was warm.

The mismatch in the verb (17) violates VIR. There are also other languages in which VVPE is argued to be present, but VIR is violated, such as Russian (Gribanova 2013), Greek (Merchant 2018), and Persian (Rasekhi 2018).

Why?

Merchant (2001, 2018) argues that the existence of narrow focus and prosody can explain the violations: VIR is present in the languages because main verbs cannot host narrow focus.

Kamali (2020) argues that the final placement of Q- particle *-mI* is a characteristic of polarity focus in Turkish, which creates alternatives.

Therefore, the clitic *-mI* might be evoking alternatives in when uttered with a special intonation that is used in alternative questions (Kamali & Krifka 2020) making the question available to be answered with a non-identical and contrastive verb.

(18) Ali yemeği sıcakken yedi mi mi (yoksa) döktü mü ?

Did Ali eat the food while it was hot (or) did he spill it while it was hot ?

- Unlike polar questions, in AP sentences the mismatch is not allowed, polar questions seem to be making the mismatched verbs more available.

Future Work

- Verbal identity and head movement
- Polar questions
- More research on Turkish ellipsis is needed (as also put forward in Kornfilt 2024)

References

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Thank You!