Obviation Problem in Turkish

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This paper explores the phenomenon called Obviation in Turkish, a fairly underrepresented language in the previous obviation literature. Turkish seems to provide conflicting evidence in the distribution of obviation facts compared to other languages. While it allows for coreferentiality in infinitivals (*-mAK*), it forces disjoint coreference with other non-finite clauses that are infinitivals marked with possessive and person agreement. Interestingly, with optative marking, it also allows for coreference with finite embedded sentences, unlike Romance languages. In this paper, I will focus mainly on non-finite and infinitival sentences and evaluate Hornstein and Martín's (2001) proposal. As it is, Turkish facts within embedded nonfinite clauses *almost* follows from Hornstein and Martín's (2001) proposal: Obviation occurs when there is no control. However, their technical assumptions do not hold for Turkish. I will show that Hornstein and Martín's (2001) proposal will be salvaged only if we introduce language-dependent parameters: case for Basque, agreement for Turkish. Öztürk and Taylan's (2016) independently justified analysis of GEN-POSS structures using a nP construction in a similar vein with vP, I believe gives additional credibility to this account of obviation.

Stage: In many languages, the understood subject of certain embedded sentences must be disjoint in reference to the understood subject of the main verb. Unlike embedded sentences, infinitivals allow for coreferentiality in understood subjects as in (2) unlike (1). Furthermore, we know that the ungrammaticality is due to the reference and not because it has the same form (3).

Problem: Non-coreference in generative grammar is poorly understood. For example, one can argue that Chomsky's (1993) "avoid pronoun" can explain these sentences in Romance languages. According to Picallo (1985) and others, the features of the Infl head block coreference. However, Ruwet (1984) argues that some coreferences are allowed when the subject has less agentivity. Due to cross-linguistic variation, many researchers (Farkas, 1992; Horn, 1984) resorted to lexical explanations through the blocking mechanism similar to Kiparsky's (1982) proposal.

(1) *Je veux que {*je/il} vienne.*
I[NOM] want.1SG that *1SG/3SG come.SBJV
'I want that {*I come, he comes}.'

(2) *Je veux venir.*
I[NOM] want.1SG come.INF
'I want to go.'

(3) *Il$_i$ veut qu'il$_{*i/j}$ vienne.*
3SG[NOM] want.3SG COMP-3SG come.SBJV
'He$_i$ want that he$_{*i/j}$ goes.'

Minimalism Account: The most promising account of obviation is proposed by Hornstein and Martín (2001). Their evidence comes from Basque infinitival sentences and follows from Hornstein's (1999) proposal of reducing PRO, Control, and Binding into a single movement module. According to his account, OC and bound pronouns have to be in a complementary distribution because bound pronouns only surface when there is no movement option. The reason we have *himself* instead of *him* in sentences like *John likes himself* is that *John* starts as an object of the verb, moves upward, and checks both the internal and external theta roles. Since *John* can only take one case, we have to introduce *self*. Hornstein and Martín (2001) show that when we try to introduce an anaphoric relation without moving, the cost is the obviation, that is, they cannot corefer.

(4) *Nik$_i$ [Ø$_{i/*k}$/*John joan] nahi dut.*
I.ERG go want 3.ABS.3.ERG
'I want to go.'

(5) *Nik$_i$ [Ø$_{*i/k}$/hura$_{*i/k}$ joatea] nahi dut.*
I.ERG 3.ABS go.NMLZ.DET.ABS want 3.ABS.3.ERG
'I want somebody else to go.'

Hornstein and Martín (2001) build their account into two assumptions: (i) arrays that are basic inputs in computation within Minimalism do not see morphological complexity (or features) and (ii) structural-case-taking infinitivals allow nonfinite lower Infl to case mark the subject position. By doing so, they eliminate the difference between infitinivals (4) and nominalizations (5) and make them have the same array as the following: NUM ={ni$_1$, joan$_1$, nahi$_1$}. Once they compete for the same set of meanings, only one of them will not be filtered in obviation cases: the one that licenses lexical DPs in subject position.

(6) * *Gel-me-m-i* *iste-di-m.*
come-NMLZ-POSS.1SG-ACC want-PST-1SG
'I wanted that I came.'

(7) *Gel-mek iste-di-m.*
come-INF want-PST-1SG
'I wanted to come.'

(8) *Gel-me-yi* *iste-di-m.*
come-INF-ACC want-PST-1SG
'I wanted to come.'

Puzzle: Unlike Romance languages, but similar to Basque, Turkish sentences can be embedded using different strategies. In this paper, I will focus on three different strategies: (i) non-finite sentential embedding (-*mA*-POSS.PERSONFEATURES-ACC), and (ii) infinitivals (-*mA*+K), and (iii) and structural case marked infinitivals (-*mA*+K-ACC) as exemplified in (6), (7), and (8). Both infinitivals license coreference independent of case marking, but nonfinite (6) necessitate disjoint coreference.

This model *slightly* falls short explaining Turkish facts. In Turkish, some nominalized sentences with structural cases (9) cannot license lexical DPs as in (10). What license lexical subjects in Turkish nominalized sentences are the possessive marking on the verb as in (11). Due to the GEN-POSS structure in Turkish, one can argue that a better translation would be 'Arif wanted Melek's coming/arrival'. If we assume Hornstein and Martín's (2001) model, since the agreement is also feature driven, we will end up with the same arrays for (10) and (11), which is NUM ={arif$_1$, melek$_1$, gel$_1$, iste$_1$}. Now, instead of the structural case, what allows lexical DPs in Turkish is the person agreement.

Öztürk and Taylan's (2016) previous analysis of GEN-POSS structures also helps us. They use a vP counterpart for nominal structures: nP. Although they do not argue for the introduction of an argument in the spec position of nP or a special licensing procedure, their data show that the valency of the noun and the presence of POSS are strongly related. POSS-marking cannot be deleted if the head noun is a semantically transitive noun in Turkish, such as *hala* (aunt) or *başlık* (title). However, they also show that POSS is not an argument marker, which is a problem for this type of analysis. In addition, the valency of the verb *gel* is the same and saturated in both the grammatical obviation and non-obviation cases.

(9) *Arif [[gel]-mey]-i* *iste-di.*
Arif [[come]-NMLZ]-ACC want-PST.3SG
'Arif wanted to come.'

(10) * *Arif [[Melek gel]-me]-yi* *iste-di.*
Arif [[Melek come]-NMLZ]-ACC want-PST.3SG
'Arif wanted Melek to come.'

(11) *Arif [[Melek-in gel]-me-sin]-i* *iste-di.*
Arif [[Melek-GEN come]-NMLZ-POSS.3SG]-ACC want-PST.3SG
'Arif wanted Melek to come.'

The competition in Turkish is affected by the morphological reality of the nominalization process, unlike in Basque. If we assume that morphology is not taken into account within the competition or after the competition as a typological parameter, we cannot explain how -*mA*+K and -*mA*+POSS.PERSONFEATURES act differently. However, if we include nominalization types in arrays, we will not have competition between structures.

References

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