Syntax and Semantics of Turkish ACC and GEN

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Turkish exhibits two phenomena known as Differential Object and Subject Marking, respectively, (DOM, DSM), which denote the characteristic that not all direct objects carry accusative marking, and not all subjects of subordinate clauses carry genitive marking. The criteria by which marking is licensed are both semantic and syntactic. The semantic criteria mainly depend on the constituent’s definiteness and specificity, while the syntactic criteria involve scrambling, topicalization, the presence of an agreement head, and, for subjects, the type of subordinate clause. Syntactic criteria have priority over semantic ones in that they can enforce marking on indefinite non-specific subjects and objects, as well as prohibit marking on definite specific subjects (not so on objects).

In this talk, I will present the relevant Turkish data and discuss their implications on functional cross-linguistic theories, especially on the OT formalization suggested by Aissen (2003). I will furthermore go into the syntactic mechanics of genitive licensing on subjects and point out the advantages and disadvantages of Kornfilt’s (2008) analysis, who argues for licensing by an agreement head, and Aygen’s (2007) approach, who raises the subject to a higher Spec,DP in order to assign genitive via ECM.

References


Kornfilt, Jaklin (2008). “DOM and Two Types of DSM in Turkish”. In: de Hoop, Helen Peter de Swart (eds.) *Differential Subject Marking*, vol. 72 of *Studies in Natural Language and Linguistic Theory*. Dordrecht: Springer.

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