

Existential Constructions in Turkish

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Abstract

The purpose of this paper is to investigate existential constructions in Turkish. The focus will be on the semantic, discourse as well as structural properties of Noun Phrases (NPs henceforth) in these structures. It is well-attested that there are different types of NPs such as bare NPs, singular and plural indefinite NPs that can serve as pivots in existential constructions in the language. However, some of them exhibit certain characteristics that are rather different from those of their counterparts in other languages. Bare NPs, for instance, are obligatorily interpreted as number-neutral and do not introduce discourse referents. This is rather unexpected given the main function of existential constructions cross-linguistically. To account for this behavior of these nominals, I argue that a pseudo-incorporation analysis that was proposed in order to explain the characteristics of direct objects in such structures as verbal sentences, idioms and light verb sentences could be extended to bare NPs in existential constructions. Unlike the analysis in previous work, however, I argue that pseudo-incorporation applies to bare NPs only, excluding singular and plural indefinite NPs. In addition, the account proposed here displays certain differences from those analyses that treat existential bare NPs as non-phrasal. A close analysis shows that existential bare NPs in Turkish are in fact phrasal elements.

Key words: Existential constructions, bare NPs, pseudo-incorporation, Turkish.

Türkçede varoluşsal yapılar

Öz

Bu çalışmanın esas amacı Türkçedeki varoluşsal yapıları incelemektir. Çalışmanın ana odağını varoluşsal yapılardaki Ad Öbeklerinin anlam bilimsel, söylem ve yapısal özellikleri oluşturmaktadır. Türkçede varoluşsal yapılarda birtakım Ad Öbeklerinin pivot olarak bulunabildiği ve bu öğelerin diğer dillerdeki muadillerinden bir takım farklı özellikler gösterdikleri önceki çalışmalarda ortaya konmuştur. Örneğin, çıplak Ad Öbekleri sayı bakımından zorunlu olarak yansız olarak yorumlanırlar ve söylem gönderiminde bulunamazlar. Bu özellikler, varoluşsal yapıların diğer dillerde ana işlevleri göz önüne alındığında Türkçede beklenmedik bir durum oluşturduğu gözükmektedir. Çıplak Ad Öbeklerinin bu karakteristiğini izah etmek için, eylem tümceleri, deyimsele cümleler ve katkısız eylem yapılarında hal eki almayan nesnelere özelliklerini açıklamak için önerilen sözde geçişim analizinin, varoluşsal yapıları da kapsayacak şekilde genişletilebileceği iddiası savunulmaktadır. Yalnız, bu önerinin aksine, sözde geçişimin sadece çıplak Ad Öbekleri için geçerli olduğu ve tekil ve çoğul belirsiz Ad Öbeklerini kapsamadığı da ortaya konmaktadır. Burada öne sürülen analiz çıplak Ad Öbeklerinin aslında öbekselle olmadığı savını iddia eden analizlerden de birtakım önemli farklılıklar

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göstermektedir. Bunun sebebi ise, Türkçe varoluşsal yapılarıdaki çıplak Ad Öbekleri detaylı bir şekilde incelendiğinde, bu öğelerin tamamıyla öbekselleştirilmiştir.

Anahtar kelimeler: Varoluşsal yapılar, çıplak ad öbekleri, sözde geçişim, Türkçe.

1. Introduction

This paper is concerned with existential sentences in Turkish. The main issues are the semantic, discourse and structural properties of NPs functioning as pivots in existential constructions. Basically, singular indefinite NPs, plural indefinite NPs and bare NPs generally appear in existentials in the language (Tura, 1986; Taylan, 1987; Keleş, 2001). The behavior of these elements is rather unexpected when we consider the primary function of existentials across languages. Bare NPs, for instance, display certain semantic and discourse properties that are quite unexpected. Interestingly, there is no formal analysis, other than a few descriptive studies (Tura, 1986; Taylan, 1987), that offers an account of the properties of Turkish existentials and the elements that appear in them even though verbal and non-verbal sentences have been widely investigated (Taylan, 2001 and work therein; Keleş, 2001; Öztürk 2005). Therefore, a thorough analysis of existential sentences and their constituents in the language seems to be warranted. In this work, I will address the above issues and propose an account, adopting the pseudo-incorporation analysis, proposed by Öztürk (2005, 2009), for caseless direct objects in various verbal constructions.

The structure of this paper is as follows: Section 2 is a general overview of existential sentences in languages including English, Turkish and Japanese. To do this is important since the similarities and differences between existential constructions in these languages are crucial for the proposed analysis. Section 3 provides a review of previous studies on Turkish existential sentences. This section also shows that earlier work do not fully provide an account of the properties of existential constructions and pivot NPs. Section 4 proposes a novel account of the formal properties of NPs in Turkish existential sentences. Section 5 argues that alternative accounts that were proposed for bare nominals in existential structures fail to capture the facts in Turkish. Section 6 concludes the paper and makes suggestions for future work.

2. Existential constructions

Existential sentences across languages have the function of asserting the existence or presence of an entity in the sense that they draw attention to an element that comes into the view or to the attention of the addressee. In addition, they introduce an entity into the world of discourse, one that fits the description provided by the NP, known as *the pivot* (cf. Milsark, 1977; Beaver et. al 2006; McNally, 2011; Weinert, 2013; Creissels, 2014; inter alia). Consider the sentences in (1).

- (1) a. There is [_{NP} *an apple*] in the basket.
 b. There are [_{NP} *women*] standing in the hall.
 c. There is [_{NP} *water*] in the cooler.

The structures in (1a-c) respectively indicate the existence of a single entity, multiple entities and a mass entity at a certain location. Each structure has an indefinite NP functioning as the *pivot* (i.e. the entity whose existence is being asserted), an expletive subject *there* at the beginning of the sentence and a prepositional phrase (PP henceforth) indicating location. Note that the NPs above are fully referential and each can introduce a discourse referent that may act as an antecedent for a pronominal in the subsequent discourse, as shown in (2).

- (2) a. There is [_{NP} *an apple*] in the basket. Take *it* and eat *it*.
 b. There are [_{NP} *women*] standing in the hall. I know *them*.
 c. There is [_{NP} *water*] in the cooler. Feel free to drink *it*.

It is obvious from the above examples that NPs in existential sentences in languages like English, regardless of whether they are countable or uncountable, are fully referential and may introduce a discourse referent for subsequent reference.

Another issue that has been much investigated in previous work concerns the occurrence of certain NPs as pivots in existential constructions. That is to say, definite NPs are not normally allowed in existential constructions. This is illustrated in (3).

- (3) a. *There is the / this / that dog in the basket.
 b. *There is each / every second-year student present.

This phenomenon is known as the definiteness restriction and has been widely analyzed since Milsark's (1974, 1977) seminal work. It states that there is a restriction on the occurrence of definite, definite and quantificational NPs in existential sentences.

The question that arises at this point is whether existential sentences and the pivot NPs always behave in a similar way in languages such as Turkish or whether they exhibit certain language-specific properties. When we consider existential sentences in Turkish, we see that there are different types of indefinite NPs that can appear in existential sentences²³. Consider the sentences in (4).

- (4) a. Bahçe-de [_{NP} *bir kedi*] var.
 garden-LOC IND cat exist
 'There is a cat in the garden.'
 b. Bahçe-de [_{NP} *kedi-ler*] var.
 garden-LOC cat-PL exist
 'There are cats in the garden.'

The NP in (4a) includes the head noun 'kedi' *cat* and the indefinite determiner 'bir' that is also homophonous with the numeral *one*.⁴ It refers to a singular entity. On the other hand, the indefinite plural NP 'kediler' *cats* in (4b) obligatorily refers to multiple entities. Moreover, there is always a dedicated predicate 'var' *exist / there is* in these sentences. Its negative counterpart is the suppletive from 'yok' *non-existent / there isn't* and both predicates can take tense markers. Note that these NPs introduce discourse referents that may act as antecedents for a pronominal in the subsequent discourse. This is exemplified in (5).

- (5) a. Bahçe-de [_{NP} *bir kedi*] var. O_i-nu dün de gör-dü-m.

² The primary focus in this paper is on presentative existential constructions that are generally of the form *NP+LOC + (bir) NP(s) var/yok* in Turkish.

³ Abbreviations in the glosses are as follows: 1 = first person; 2 = second person; ABIL = ability; ACC = accusative marker; AOR = aorist marker; D = determiner; DP = determiner phrase; GEN = genitive marker; IND = indefiniteness marker; INF = infinitive marker; LOC = locative marker; N = noun; NP = noun phrase; PAST = past tense; PL = plural marker; POSS= possessive marker; PROG = progressive marker; Q = question particle; SG = singular marker; SP = subject participle; SUBJ = subject marker; T = tense; TOP = topic marker; TP = tense phrase; V = verb; VP = verb phrase

⁴ The question whether 'bir' is merely a numeral or it should be considered as an indefinite determiner will be discussed in Section 4.

garden-LOC IND cat exist it-ACC yesterday too see-PAST-1SG

‘There is a cat in the garden. I saw it yesterday too.’

b. Bahçe-de [_{NP} *kediler*] var. Onları-ın hepsi beyaz.

garden-LOC cat-PL exist they-GEN all white

‘There are cats in the garden. All of them are white’

The examples above show that the characteristics of these NPs show close similarities to their counterparts in English. Note, however, that these two types of NPs are not the only ones that can appear in existentials. Bare NPs, too, can appear in these constructions. This is shown in (6).

(6) a. Bahçe-de [_{NP} *ked*] var.

garden-LOC cat exist

‘There is a cat/are cats in the garden.’

b. Masa-da [_{NP} *kitap*] var.

table-LOC book exist

‘There is a book/are books on the table.’

The bare NPs in (6) exhibit certain differences in terms of their semantic and discourse characteristics. First, they do not carry any morphology with respect to number and are interpreted as number-neutral. In other words, bare NPs are not specified for singularity or plurality. Second, they do not introduce discourse referents that may act as an antecedent for a pronominal element in the following discourse. This is exemplified in (7).

(7) Bahçe-de [_{NP} *ked*] var. *O_i-nu / *onları-ı sev-di-m.

garden-LOC cat exist it-ACC / they-ACC like-PAST-1SG

‘There is a cat/are cats in the garden. I like it / them.’

As shown in (7), an overt pronoun cannot refer back to a bare NP in existential constructions in the language. The characteristics of bare NPs in existentials are rather interesting since the main function of existential sentences is to semantically assert the existence or presence of one or more entities. On the other hand, the pivot NP introduces a referent into the world of discourse, one that may be in an anaphoric relationship with an overt pronominal (McNally, 2011; Creissels, 2014). However, this is not the case for existential bare NPs in Turkish. The only possible way in which a bare NP can be an antecedent for an element is if that element is a null anaphor. Consider the following exchange.

(8) A: Park-ta (boş) yer var mı?

parking lot-LOC (empty) space exist Q

‘Is there any (empty) space in the parking lot?’

B’: *O-nu / *Onlar-ı ikinci sıra-da bul-abil-ir-sin.

it-ACC / they-ACC second row-LOC find-ABIL-AOR-2SG

B’’: İkinci sırada bulabilirsiniz.

‘You can find (it) in the second row.’

This property of bare NPs as antecedents in Turkish is reminiscent of the characteristics of their counterparts in languages. For instance, Espinal and McNally (2011) show that bare NPs in Catalan can be an antecedent for only the partitive pronoun ‘en’. This pronoun is argued to be a property-referring

anaphor that denotes an abstract entity that is being talked about. On the other hand, bare NPs can never act as an antecedent for a full pronoun 'el' *it* that is analyzed as an entity type anaphor. This pronoun denotes an individual or an instance of something. In that respect, null anaphors in Turkish pattern with property-type anaphors whereas overt ones pattern with entity-type anaphors.

Note also that it is not a phenomenon observed only in Turkish. Bare NPs in Japanese (Corbett, 2000, Bernard Comrie, personal communication), Mandarin Chinese (Chapell and Creissels, 2016) and some other languages are also number-neutral and do not introduce discourse referents, as exemplified in (9).⁵

- (9) a. Kooen ni wa *inu* ga iru rasii.
 park in TOP dog SUBJ be seems
 'It seems that there is a dog / are some dogs in the park.'
- b. (Zai) huāyuán-li yǒu *rén*
 (at) garden-in have person
 'There is a person / are people in the garden.'

In (9a) the NP *inu* 'dog' in Japanese is unspecified for number and is interpreted as number-neutral. The same is true for the NP *rén* 'person' in (9b) in Mandarin Chinese. The existence of such sentences in typologically different languages pose a challenge for the general understanding of existential constructions and their pivot NPs. The question that arises at this point is how one would come up with a formalism in order to account for the characteristics of existential constructions in the language. There is a number of studies on existentials in the literature; however, they are mostly descriptive in nature and do not offer a formal account. In the next section, I provide an overview of previous work on existentials in Turkish.

3. Previous analyses

There are several studies dealing with the characteristics of existential constructions in Turkish (Lewis, 1975; Tura, 1986; Taylan, 1987; Keleş, 2001). Note, however, that these studies are mostly descriptive and do not propose a formal analysis. Lewis (1975) perhaps is the first to discuss existential sentences in the language; however, his work mostly contains the description of the grammar of Turkish and does not provide an in-depth analysis of these constructions. In her work on definiteness and referentiality in non-verbal sentences, Tura (1986) notes that there are at least six different statuses of NPs in Turkish nonverbal sentences, based on their linguistic and extralinguistic properties such as definiteness, referentiality, animacy and the context. Those six statuses that NPs may assume are classified as (i) definite-referential, (ii) indefinite-referential, (iii) nondefinite-referential, (iv) definite-nonreferential, (v) indefinite-nonreferential and (vi) nondefinite-nonreferential. Tura (1986:166) provides the following as an example for nondefinite (i.e. neither definite nor indefinite) referential NPs in the language.

- (10) Beş-te *otobüs* var-dı ama...
 five LOC bus is PAST but
 'There was / were a bus / buses at five but...'

⁵ The examples from languages other than Turkish and English have been taken from studies on existential sentences and/or grammatical number. This was done in order to have a reliable source for the languages in question.

The bare NP *otobüs* ‘bus’ in (10) is categorized as a nondefinite, referential NP. It is referential since it has been uttered in a factive context and in an affirmative sentence witnessed in the past. Therefore, the speaker is committed to the existence of the entity in question. However, the speaker does not intend to refer to a certain bus or buses but is rather interested in the existence and the availability of a bus or buses. The reference is not to a particular individual bus but rather to the class to which it belongs. Here the speaker is not interested in establishing a discourse referent that they may or may not take up in the subsequent discourse. This is indicated by the neutralization of the singular-plural distinction using a zero phrase (\emptyset *otobüs*) instead of a *bir*-phrase (*bir otobüs*) in the utterance. Tura concludes that due to these discourse features *otobüs* in (10) is assigned the status of nondefinite-referential. On the other hand, Tura notes that a *bir*-phrase in existential sentences is interpreted differently, as shown in (11).

- (11) Beş-te *bir otobüs* var-dı.
 five LOC one bus is PAST
 ‘There was a bus at five.’

In (11) the NP *bir otobüs* has a referential but indefinite status because of the presence of the unstressed numeral *bir* ‘a, one’ in the structure. The sentence in (11) differs from the one in (10) because in the former reference is only to a class membership without number distinction whereas in the latter reference is still to the class membership but with the number distinction. In other words, a certain member of the class has been picked out by the speaker. Here the speaker refers to a certain bus using a *bir*-phrase, indicating the hearer that they have further information about the referent and will or may continue discussing it using a co-referential expression: *Onunla gelecektim* (‘I was going to come on it.’). Tura concludes that existential NPs may be definite, indefinite or non-definite in factive contexts. On the other hand, in terms of referentiality, all NPs in nonverbal sentences (i.e. existentials and copulars) are by definition referential in factive contexts. Their existence is presupposed or asserted in the context of discourse.

In her paper on the role of semantic features in word order, Taylan (1987) notes that it is possible to talk about two different existential structures in Turkish, namely presentative existentials which are typically of the form NP + loc NP var / yok and possessive existentials, which are typically of the form (NP + loc) NP + gen NP + poss var / yok. An example for a presentative existential would be as in (12).

- (12) Bahçe-de *bir köpek* var.
 garden-LOC one dog exist
 ‘There is a dog in the garden.’

Taylan notes that presentative existentials require the nominative NP to be indefinite and to occur only in the position before the predicate and any variation in word order would lead to ungrammaticality. Taylan goes on to say that the grammatical subject (the nominative NP) has an indefinite reading even when the indefinite article *bir* ‘one’ is missing from the structure, as in (13).

- (13) Bahçe-de *köpek* var.
 garden-LOC dog exist
 ‘There is a (some) dog in the garden.’

In that sense, Taylan does not make a distinction between bare NPs and indefinite singular NPs in existentials. This is rather different from Tura's analysis since she distinguishes between bare NPs and singular indefinite NPs, the former being nondefinite and interpreted as neither definite nor indefinite.

Kelepir's (2001) work, on the other hand, is primarily concerned with the syntactic position and interpretation of NPs in existential sentences. In terms of syntax, Kelepir is interested in whether NPs in existentials are verb phrase internal (VP-internal) or not. Semantically, the question she addresses is whether these NPs are presuppositional or not. She (2001:174-177) argues that NPs in existential clauses are the 'subjects' of the structure and carry nominative case.⁶ Following Diesing (1992), she claims that all NP types in existentials are VP-internal and hence non-presuppositional. Consider the following examples (Kelepir, 2001, p. 174-176).

- (14) a. Sepet-te kedi var-dı. / Sepet-te bir kedi var-dı. / Sepet-te kedi-ler var-dı.
 basket-LOC cat var -PAST /a cat /cats
 'There was cat/a cat/cats in the basket.'
- b. *Kedi sepet-te var-dı. / *Bir kedi sepet-te var-dı. /*Kediler sepet-te var-dı.
 cat basket-LOC var-PAST /a cat /cats

What is crucial in (14) is that the ordering of elements in existential constructions is rather strict and the pivot NPs cannot come before the locative. Kelepir accounts for the ungrammaticality of the sentences in (14b) by arguing that in an existential sentence if the interpretation intended is the assertion of the existence of the denotation of the Noun Phrase, that Noun Phrase cannot be interpreted existentially if it occurs in the sentence-initial position. In order to be able to be interpreted existentially, it has to remain inside the V(erb) P(hrase). However, its position in (14b) forces it to be outside the existential closure, which leads to ungrammaticality.

The above discussion has shown that previous analyses have dealt with various issues about existential constructions and certain structural and interpretive properties of pivot NPs were investigated. However, none of these analyses provides an account to formally capture the actual properties of NPs and the apparent distinctions between them. Therefore, a novel account capturing the facts about existential constructions in a uniform manner seems to be necessary. In the next section, I provide a new analysis in order to address the issues raised above.

4. The pseudo-incorporation analysis

It was shown above that bare NPs, singular indefinite and plural indefinite NPs occur as pivots in Turkish existential sentences. It was also shown that these NPs do not behave similarly in terms of their semantic and pragmatic characteristics. The properties of bare NPs are rather different given the fact that they appear in existential constructions. The question that arises at this point is: Why do bare NPs behave the way they do in the language? To put it differently, is there a way to uniformly capture their behavior? In fact, the behavior of different NP types in existential sentences display strong similarities with that of their counterparts in verbal clauses, idioms and light verb constructions in the language. In other words, the properties of NPs in existentials correlates with those of NPs in other sentence types in

⁶ Note that Erguvanlı (1984, p. 10) also argues that presentative existential sentences require a nominative-marked NP. In the current analysis, on the other hand, I assume that these NPs do not in fact bear nominative case which is generally associated with notions such as definiteness and presuppositionality in the language.

that they display distinct semantic and discourse characteristics. Consider the behavior of bare NPs in the verbal sentences below.

(15) a. Ayşe [NP *kitap*] oku-du.

Ayşe.NOM book read.PAST

'Ayşe did book-reading.'

b. Ali [NP *elma*] ye-di.

Ali apple eat-PAST

'Ali did apple-eating.'

(16) Ahmet [NP *surat*] as-tı.

Ahmet face hang-PAST

'Ahmet got upset.'

(17) Ahmet [NP *dua*] et-ti.

Ahmet prayer do-PAST

'Ahmet prayed.'

The bare NPs '*kitap*' *book* in (15a) and '*elma*' *apple* (15b) are number-neutral since they are not specified for number by way of a number-expressing element. The sentence in (15a) would be true in those cases where only the first two pages of a book, or an entire book, or two different books were read. Note also that these NPs do not introduce new discourse referents in the subsequent discourse. Moreover, they are known to obligatorily take the narrowest scope in sentences. The same is true for the NP '*surat*' *face* in the idiomatic sentence in (16) and the NP '*dua*' *prayer* in the light verb construction in (17). Now consider the sentence below.

(18) Ayşe *kitap*_i oku-du. *Sonra *o*_i-nu arkadaş-ı-na ver-di.

Ayşe book read-PAST then it-ACC friend-POSS-DAT give-PAST

'Ayşe did book-reading. Then she gave it to his friend.'

The impossibility of the co-referentiality between pronominal in the subsequent discourse and its antecedent in (18) clearly indicates that bare NPs in verbal sentences do not introduce new discourse referents that may subsequently be in an anaphoric relationship through an overt pronominal element. Following Massam's (2001) seminal work on the structure and interpretation of bare NPs, Öztürk (2005, 2009) analyzes these structures as an instance of syntactic pseudo-incorporation in which the bare NP is pseudo-incorporated into the verbal element, forming a complex predicate with it.⁷ The syntactic structure of the verbal domain in (19) is given below.

(19)

	VP
	/ \
Complex Predicate →	V'
	/ \
	NP V
	kitap oku-

⁷ Note that both theme pseudo-incorporation in transitive and unaccusative constructions and agent pseudo-incorporation in intransitive and unergative structures are possible in the language.

Based on the similarities in semantic and discourse characteristics of bare NPs, I propose that the analysis of bare NPs in verbal, idiomatic and light verb constructions could be extended in order to account for the behavior of bare NPs in existential constructions. Now consider the sentence in (20) and its syntactic structure in (21).

- (20) Bahçe-de [NP köpek] var.
 garden-LOC dog exist
 ‘There is a dog / are dogs in the garden.’
- (21)
- | | |
|---------------------|--------------|
| | TP |
| | / \ |
| | NP T’ |
| | Bahçe-de / \ |
| | VP T |
| | / \ |
| Complex Predicate → | V’ |
| | / \ |
| | NP V |
| | köpek var |

Following Öztürk (2005), I argue that the bare NP ‘köpek’ *dog* in (21) is pseudo-incorporated into the verb and the complex predicate formation takes place at the V-bar level. These NPs lack any number specifying elements such as articles, numerals and quantifiers and hence are devoid of any functional syntactic structure. On the other hand, following Keleşir (2001), I argue that the NP ‘bahçe-de’ *in the garden* appears in the specifier position of the Tense Phrase (TP).⁸ The behavior of the pseudo-incorporated NPs has strong parallels with that of its counterparts in verbal, idiomatic and light verb constructions. We have then a uniform account of bare NPs across all clause types in Turkish. In addition, this analysis have implications for why bare NPs cannot be an antecedent for overt pronominal elements as anaphors in the language. As pointed out above, bare NPs lack any functional projection that is associated with expressing number. However, overt pronouns always express number, ‘o’ *it* being singular and ‘onlar’ *they* being plural. However, this is not the case for null anaphors that do not express number. Therefore, they are compatible with bare NPs as their antecedents in the subsequent discourse. This reasoning is in tandem with Modarresi’s (2015) Discourse Representation Theory (DRT) account of bare nominals in Persian in which she argues that overt pronouns cannot pick up pseudo incorporated nominal as antecedents.

Note that Öztürk (2005) also argues that the same pseudo-incorporation applies to singular and plural NPs in verbal clauses. More specifically, all types of NPs are pseudo-incorporated into the verb so long as they do not carry case marking. However, the properties of indefinite singular and plural NPs in verbal clauses and existential constructions are quite similar. They are both number-specific and do introduce discourse referents for subsequent reference. Therefore, it would not be reasonable so to argue that the structure proposed for bare NPs also holds for singular and plural indefinite NPs. Instead, I argue that

⁸ Keleşir (2001, p. 178) argues that the locative phrase undergoes movement and appears in the [Spec, TP] position in order to satisfy the Extended Projection Principle (EPP) / occurrence feature of T.

indefinite NPs do not go through incorporation but are included in Determiner Phrases (DPs) in the language. Consider the sentence in (22) and its syntactic structure in (23).

(22) Bahçe-de [_{DP} *bir köpek*] var.
garden-LOC IND dog exist
'There is a dog in the garden.'

(23)

```

      TP
      /  \
      NP  T'
  Bahçe-de /  \
            VP T
            /  \
            V'
            /  \
            DP  V
            /  \  var
            bir D'
            /  \
            NP  D
            |  |
            N'  ø
            |
            N
            köpek
  
```

I argue that the singular indefinite NP in (23) is included in the functional projection, DP, which has a phonologically null head. The DP contains the indefinite determiner in the specifier position through which singularity is expressed. The introduction of discourse reference is achieved by way of the functional projection. In that sense, the difference between the syntactic structures in (21) and (23) is crucial in terms of capturing the semantic and discourse characteristics of bare NPs, on the one hand, and indefinite singular and plural NPs, on the other. Note that this proposal is compatible with the analysis proposed in Arslan-Kechriotis (2009ab) and Kornfilt (2007, 2017) in terms of whether there is a DP layer in Turkish. Based on the differences in terms of scope, ellipsis, adjective modification and pronominalization in verbal sentences, Arslan-Kechriotis (2009ab) argues that bare nominals are NPs whereas singular and plural indefinite NPs are included in DPs. Similarly, Kornfilt (2017) convincingly argues that Turkish should be viewed as an article/DP language. Therefore, there is sufficient motivation and evidence for the existence of DP in Turkish.

Note also that there is another piece of evidence that bare NPs, unlike singular and plural indefinite NPs, cannot head relative constructions. Consider the sentences below.

(24) a. Bahçe-de ulu-mak-ta ol-an bir köpek / köpek-ler var.
garden-LOC howl-INF-LOC be-SP IND dog / dog-PL exist
'There is a howling dog / are howling dogs in the garden.'

- b. *Bahçe-de ulu-mak-ta ol-an köpek var.
garden-LOC howl- INF-LOC be-SP dog exist
Intended: 'There is /are some dog(s) in the garden.'
- (25) a. Kapı-da sen-le konuş-mak iste-yen bir adam / adam-lar var.
door-LOC you-with talk-INF want-SP IND man man-PL exist
'There is a man / are men who want to talk to you.'
- b. *Kapı-da sen-le konuş-mak iste-yen adam var.
door-LOC you-with talk-INF want-SP man exist
Intended: 'There is some man / men who want(s) to talk to you.'

The ungrammaticality of the sentences in (24b) and (25b), as opposed to the grammaticality of the ones in (24a) and (25a) indicate that it is impossible for bare NPs to had relative constructions. What this shows is that they do not act as independent elements in the structure while this is not the case for singular and plural NPs. This is in fact expected given the fact that bare NPs are number-neutral and do not introduce discourse referents whereas a noun head modified by a relative clause generally refers to a number-specific entity with easier anaphoric uptake.

Another point here is that the behavior of NPs in existential sentences is not so different from that of their counterparts that co-occur with 'coming into existence' verbs like 'belirmek' *appear/materialize*, 'durmak' *lie/stand* and 'çıkılmak' *come/appear* in Turkish. This is shown below.

- (26) a. Sokak-ta adam belir-di.
street-LOC man appear-PAST.
'There appeared a man / men on the street.'
- b. Sokak-ta bir adam belir-di.
street-LOC IND man appear-PAST.
'There appeared a man on the street.'
- (27) a. Sepet-te elma dur-uyor.
basket-LOC apple lie-PROG
'There lie(s) an apple /apples in the basket.'
- b. Sepet-te bir elma dur-uyor.
basket-LOC IND apple lie-PROG
'There lies an apple in the basket.'

Similar to the existential predicate, these coming into existence verbs assert the existence of some entity with respect to a location rather than indicating an action. Whether or not the NP introduces a discourse referent depends on the type of the NP in question. In that sense, the behavior of NPs occurring with these verbs correlates with that of NPs in existential constructions. Arguing for the same syntactic configurations for the two structures (i.e. verbal and existential), then we provide further support for the analysis proposed in this work.

Note that the analysis presented here has certain implications for the status of the element 'bir' in Turkish and the cross-linguistic typology of the distribution of determiners. The question whether 'bir' should be treated as a numeral only or whether it should be considered as an indefinite determiner is still being addressed in recent studies. This is mostly due to Crisma (1999) and Longobardi's (2001)

observation about the existence of determiner types across languages. These researchers argue that there are no languages that have an indefinite determiner but lack a definite one. Following this line of analysis, Aygen (2002, 2007) and Öztürk (2005) maintain that making the claim that ‘bir’ is an indefinite determiner would make Turkish a highly exceptional language cross-linguistically. Besides, arguing that ‘bir’ is problematic for the head-directionality parameter as Turkish is a head-final language and ‘bir’ comes before head nouns. Therefore, their conclusion is that ‘bir’ cannot be a determiner. However, Kornfilt (2007, 2017) and Arslan-Kechrotis (2009ab) argue for the opposite view, as briefly discussed above. For instance, Kornfilt (2017:154-155) criticizes the idea that if a language has only one determiner, it should be a definite rather than an indefinite one. According to Kornfilt, the idea that Turkish has no definite determiner, and therefore, ‘bir’ cannot be an indefinite determiner is rather circular. The point here is that Turkish is dismissed as a language having an indefinite, but no definite, determiner purely based on cross-linguistic statistics. However, in that very same statistics Turkish could not appear as a counterexample, given the author’s classification of ‘bir’. As for the head-directionality issue, it argues only against an analysis of these determiners as D. However, it is fully compatible with an analysis in which determiners occupy the specifier position of DP, as proposed in the account above.

Kornfilt goes on to say that there is some good reason to argue that ‘bir’ is in fact an indefinite determiner as the distribution of ‘bir’ as an indefinite is different from that of the numeral ‘bir’ in the language. Consider the examples taken from Kornfilt (2017:155).

- (28) a. *Bir / beş yaşlı kadın*
 one / five old woman
 ‘One/five old woman’
- b. *Yaşlı bir kadın*
 old a woman
 ‘An old woman’

As is clear from (28a) and (28b), numerals precede adjectival modifiers whereas indefinite determiner follows them in the language. Similarly, the proposed analysis also has implications for the arguments about whether there are functional projections in Turkish. Some accounts like the one proposed in Öztürk (2005) claim that there is no reason to posit any functional projections such as Determiner Phrase (DP) and little *v(erb)* Phrase (*vP*) in the language. Similar arguments were made in recent work such as Boškovič and Şener (2014) where it was argued that Turkish patterns with NP languages and not DP languages. On the other hand, Kelepir (2001), Arslan-Kechrotis (2009ab) and Kornfilt (2017) among others, argue that postulating functional projections is in fact necessary, if not obligatory. In that sense, the arguments made in this work support the views that ‘bir’ is an indefinite determiner and Turkish has a DP as a functional projection. In the next section, I will look into an alternative analysis proposed for bare nominals in existential constructions and argue that it is not viable for accounting for the Turkish data.

5. Alternative bare NP analysis

That bare NPs can appear in existential constructions in some languages is attested. There is a number of studies on existential sentences and especially the properties of bare NPs in them. Some of these studies propose accounts that are different from the one offered in this paper. For instance, in their work on some Romance languages, Espinal and McNally (2011) analyze the behavior of bare nominals in

existential constructions in Spanish and Catalan. Consider the Spanish sentences below, taken from Espinal and McNally (2011: 123).

- (29) a. Hi ha *garatge* a l'edifici.
 there has garage at the.building
 'There is a garage / are garages in the building.'
- b. Hi ha *un garatge* a l'edifici.
 there has a garage at the.building
 'There is a garage in the building.'

Espinal and McNally argue that the bare nominal '*garatge*' *garage* in (29a) is number-neutral and do not license an overt pronoun. This is different from the behavior of the singular indefinite NP '*un garatge*' *a garage* which is number-specific and does introduce a discourse referent. They go on to say that bare nominals in Spanish and Catalan existential sentences show the characteristics of incorporation in which the verbal element combines with a head noun, as illustrated in (30).

- (30) V
 / \
 V N

The structure in (30) is an instance of morphological incorporation involving the combination of a noun head and a verb head to yield a larger verb head. This is different from pseudo incorporation that is essentially a syntactic incorporation. The question that arises at this point is if this would be the case for bare NPs Turkish. In other words, whether the type of incorporation observed in Turkish would be morphological incorporation instead of (syntactic) pseudo incorporation. Note, however, that Espinal and McNally originally propose the structure in (30) for bare NPs in verbal sentences in which a verb head combines with a head noun and they together form a complex predicate. The set of verbal elements that co-occur with bare NPs, on the other hand, is rather limited Spanish and Catalan. Specifically, the verbal predicates that can take bare NPs are lexically restricted to what is called 'have' predicates in these languages. In contrast, there is no restriction on bare NPs so long as the combination of the bare NP and the predicate denotes a characterizing property. The only difference between the predicates in verbal sentences and existential sentences then is that in the former the lexical verb have the formal feature 'have' whereas in the latter the lexical verb has the formal feature [Loc]. Note, however, that there is no such lexical restriction on verbs that co-occur with bare NPs in Turkish. In fact, all types of verbs, regardless of their lexical semantics, and nominal predicates can co-occur with bare NPs in the language. There is also ample evidence that incorporation is in fact phrasal in Turkish. For instance, certain focus particles like *bile* 'even', *da* 'too' and the yes/no question particle *-mI*, can appear between the bare NP and the existential verb, indicating that these two elements do not form a morphologically complex predicate acting as a single unit. This is illustrated in (31).

- (31) a. Bahçe-de [NP kedi] *de* var.
 garden-LOC cat too exist
 'There is a cat / are cats in the garden too.'
- b. Bahçe-de [NP kedi] *bile* var.
 garden-LOC cat even exist
 'There is even a cat / are even cats in the garden.'

- c. Bahçe-de [NP kedi] *mi* var?
 garden-LOC cat Q exist
 ‘Is it a cat / cats in the garden?’

The existence of such structures as in (31a-c) clearly indicates that the bare NP and the existential predicate cannot have formed a single unit morphologically. Otherwise, it would have been impossible for focus particles to intervene between the two elements. Note also that even though bare NPs are not associated with any functional projection and do not co-occur with number expressing elements such as determiners, numerals and quantifiers, nouns head can still appear with adjectival modification, as in (32a), and can be joined by way of a conjunction, as in (32b).

- (32) a. Sepet-te [NP *yeşil elma*] var.
 basket-LOC green apple exist
 ‘There is / are green apple(s) in the basket.’
 b. Sepet-te [NP *yeşil ve kırmızı elma*] var.
 basket-LOC green and red apple exist
 ‘There is /are green and red apple(s) in the basket.’

Both the occurrence of an adjective along with the bare noun in (32a) and the possibility of conjunction in (32b) indicate that the incorporated element is not just a lexical head but it is itself a phrase. Note also that both NPs keep their number neutrality even though they are modified and appear in a conjunction respectively. In that sense, it is not reasonable to posit that bare NPs in the language are not phrasal, but are only lexical heads forming a unit with the predicate morphologically.

To recapitulate, I have argued that the properties of bare NPs in existential constructions in Turkish is best accounted for by arguing that they are pseudo-incorporated into the existential verb. However, this is not the case for indefinite singular and plural NPs that were argued to be included in the DP. I have also shown that the alternative bare nominal analysis in Spanish and Catalan is not compatible with the facts in Turkish.

6. Conclusion

In this paper, I investigated existential constructions in Turkish. There are various types of NPs such as bare NPs, singular and plural indefinite NPs that can appear as pivots in existential constructions. Among these NPs, the behavior of bare NPs in these constructions is rather unexpected since they are interpreted as number-neutral and do not introduce discourse referents that may act as antecedents in the subsequent discourse. This is contrary to what is generally expected of existential structures across languages since they are generally used to assert the existence of some entity or entities, and pivot NPs typically introduce a discourse referent into the world of discourse, one that may be in an anaphoric relationship with a pronominal. In order to account for this behavior of bare NPs I argued, based on Öztürk (2005, 2009), that similar to bare direct objects in verbal sentences, idioms and light verb constructions, bare NPs in existential structures undergo pseudo-incorporation where the bare NP and the existential predicate together form a complex syntactic unit. Unlike Öztürk, however, I argued that singular and plural indefinite NPs are different from bare NPs and do not go through pseudo-incorporation. The fact that they are number-specific and can introduce discourse referents led to the conclusion that they are in fact included in DPs. Bare NPs were also shown to appear in Spanish and Catalan existential constructions, as reported in Espinal and McNally (2011). However, the current

analysis is dramatically different from their proposal since they argue that bare NPs in Spanish and Catalan go through incorporation at the morphological level in existentials. I showed, however, that bare NPs in Turkish are full syntactic elements rather than just being lexical heads. The analysis also has certain implications for the widely discussed issue of the status of 'bir' and of whether there is a need to argue for functional projections in Turkish syntax. Based on the facts presented in this work, I argued that it is reasonable, if not necessary, to treat 'bir' as an indefinite determiner and to propose the existence of functional projections in the language. Further work on existentials and the properties of their components in Turkish and other languages will shed more light on the true nature of bare nominals across all clause types.

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