

*Say what? A Turkish word order restriction explained by prosody

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1 Introduction

There is a well known word order restriction in Turkish:

- (1) *wh-* words must precede a clause-mate predicate.
Erguvanlı Taylan (1984), a.o. (to be refined)
- (2) Can kimi gördü cf. Can Aliyi gördü
*Can gördü kimi Can gördü Aliyi
Can who saw who Can Ali saw Ali
Who did Can see? Can saw Ali.

In this poster:

- A generalization of (1): the *say what constraint*.
- A step towards an explanation:
The obligatory $\uparrow H^*$ pitch accent associated with matrix *wh-* items cannot be realized in certain deaccented fields.
post-verbally in (1)

2 The say what constraint

2.1 Matrix scope *wh-* items must precede higher heads

- Matrix scope *wh-* possessors cannot follow possessum:
- (3) Münci [kimin arabasını] gördü?
*Münci [arabasını kimin] gördü?
Münci whose car whose saw
Whose car did Münci see?
- cf. ✓ ... (Dilaranın) arabasını (Dilaranın)...
- Similar effects with PPs, AdjPs, RCs.
 - Formal statement of the *say what constraint*:
- (4) If a phrase YP is (Turkish is head final)
i. properly contained in a phrase XP, and
ii. is a matrix scope *wh-* item,
then, YP cannot follow the head X of XP.

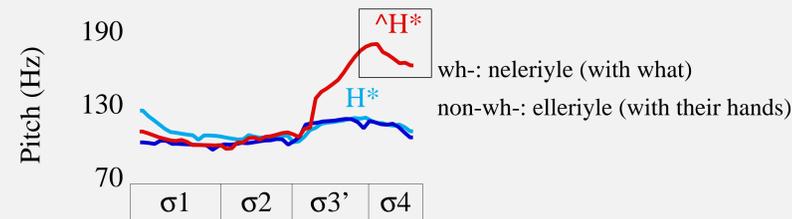
- Working hypothesis: (4) constrains rightward movement.
Bhatt & Dayal (2007); Kural (1997)
Leftward movement of *wh-* items is not constrained in this way.

2.2 Embedded scope *wh-* items escape constraint

- The constraint does not apply to embedded scope *wh-* items.
- (5) Can [benim kimi gördüğümü] merak ediyo
Can [benim gördüğümü] merak ediyo kimi
Can I who saw wonders who
Can wonders who I saw.
- NOT an inherent, lexical property of *wh-* words.

3 Pitch contour on *wh-* item correlates with scope

- Matrix scope *wh-* items → upstepped high pitch accent ($\uparrow H^*$).
 - Embedded scope *wh-* items → regular high pitch accent (H^*).
Pattern like non-*wh-* items.
- (6) Pitch track comparison: 4 syllables, penultimate stress
matrix scope *wh-* (red); embedded scope *wh-* (blue); non-*wh-* DP (cyan)



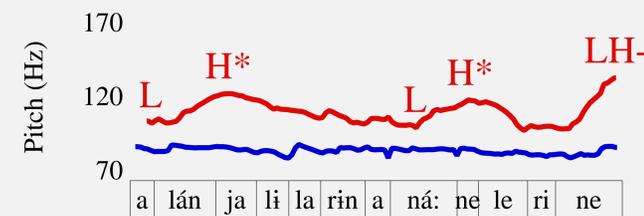
4 Deaccented fields

The field between right edges of X and XP is deaccented.

[_{XP} [_{XP} ... X] _____]
deaccenting

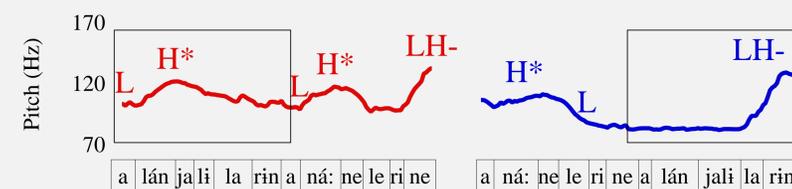
4.1 Comparing preverbal vs. postverbal intonation

- In pre-predicate field, variety of pitch accents & edge tones.
Kan (2009); Kamali (2011); İpek (2015)
- (7) In post-predicate field → deaccenting Özge (2003)
preverbal (red) vs. postverbal (blue) DP
Alanyalıların ananelerine, 'to the grandmothers of the ones from Alanya'



4.2 Comparing pre-possessum vs. post-possessum intonation

- In pre-possessum field, pitch accents.
 - In post-possessum field, no pitch accents.
 - Right edge tone marks edge of possessive DP. (İpek, 2015)
- (8) In post-possessum field → deaccenting
Possessor>Possessum (red); Possessum>Possessor (blue)



5 Proposal

The *say what constraint* is accounted for by two conflicting prosodic requirements.

- Descriptive prosodic properties:
 1. Matrix scope *wh-* items have an $\uparrow H^*$ pitch accent (Section 3).
(This is not a lexical property of wh- words.)
 2. The field between the right edge of a head X and the right edge of XP is deaccented (Section 4).
- Inductive step:
Properties 1. and 2. are obligatory.
- Consequence by general reasoning:
Properties 1. and 2. cannot hold at the same time.
"An item cannot simultaneously be accented and deaccented."
∴ Matrix scope *wh-* words cannot follow higher heads.

6 Predictions

- Prediction 1:
A *wh-* possessor with *embedded* scope may follow possessum.
(No $\uparrow H^*$.)
- (9) %[Arabasını kimin] gördüğümü biliyosun.
car whose I saw you know
You know whose car I saw. cf. (3)
- Prediction 2:
Post-predicate matrix scope *wh-* items:
Clauses introduced by *ki* are (post-verbal and) not deaccented.
(Kan, 2009)
Matrix scope *wh-* words should be acceptable there.
- (10) a. *Can sanıyo [kimi gördüğünü]?
Can believes who he saw nominalization → deaccenting
b. ?Can sanıyo [ki kimi gördü]?
Can believes ki who he saw
Who does Can believe that he saw? ki → no deaccenting

7 Concluding remarks

- An old word order restriction generalized, the *say what constraint*: Matrix scope *wh-* items must precede higher heads.
- Restatement as a prosodic incompatibility between pitch contour of *wh-* item and deaccenting.
(This brings us one step closer to an explanation.)
- This result extends to polar question foci marked by *mi*.
- Further research:
 - Underlying causes of $\uparrow H^*$ and deaccented fields?
 - Syntax-prosody mapping?