

# **Parallels and differences between verbal and nominal clauses and nominal phrases in Turkish**

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## **1. Introduction and summary**

Along with Hungarian, Turkish possessive phrases are prime examples of syntactic domains that exhibit similarities to clauses—at least with nominalized embedded clauses, whose subjects are genitive (rather than nominative), as are possessors, and whose agreement markers are “nominal” rather than “verbal”, i.e. come from a dedicated “possessive paradigm”, as do the markers on the possessed heads of possessive nominal phrases. Furthermore, both nominalized clauses and possessive phrases are overtly case-marked externally, and with the same case markers, depending on their positions in their own local domains. These were the main reasons for Kornfilt’s (1984) proposal to assign a similar structure to possessive phrases and to nominalized embedded clauses, and to propose an identical functional projection for both, i.e. Agr[+N]-phrase (corresponding to the DP of Abney 1987), along with analyzing possessors and subjects as specifiers that agree with the Agr[+N]-head in both instances, thus having their genitive case licensed in identical ways.

In addition to these parallels between nominalized clauses and possessive phrases on the one hand, there are also obvious parallels between nominalized and verbal clauses in Turkish, on the other hand. Both are fully propositional and can accommodate the full array of their respective predicates’ argument structure; both can have predicates with overt passive morphology, and both need overt agreement on their predicates for either overt subjects or (small) pro-subjects (i.e. clearly pronominal null subjects, rather than PRO-subjects) to be licensed. While the agreement morphology for either type looks different ([+V] for verbal clauses and [+N] for nominal clauses), and while the morphological case on the subject is different, too (null, for nominative, in verbal clauses and overt, for genitive, in nominal clauses), the correlations between the type of subject and the overt agreement morphology are the same, motivating a proposal for a syntactic Subject Case for both clause types, licensed in the same way, and realized morphologically depending on the category features of the predicates and the related functional head, i.e. Agr. Thus, even verbal clauses exhibit parallels to fully nominal possessive phrases.

However, clauses also exhibit differences, depending on whether they are adjuncts or arguments. For example, overt subjects of adjunct clauses are licensed via a default Case mechanism, unavailable in argument clauses; such clauses lack overt agreement. I extend this mechanism to adjunct clauses that do have agreement, showing that even there, Subject Case is independent from agreement and is default. An interesting dichotomy is exhibited by adjunct clauses that do have agreement, however: when there is an (abstract) A’-operator, such as in

comparatives and in relative clauses, the agreement does get “activated”, and the subject is assigned genitive, rather than the default (nominative) case. Descriptively, the operator turns adjunct clauses into “argumental”, or “referential” (in the sense of Rizzi 1994) ones, where the agreement head is always “active”, thus yielding yet another kind of parallelism.

## 2. Parallels between possessive phrases and nominalized embedded clauses in Turkish

Two main types of nominalized embeddings:

- (1) Ali [biz -im kitab -ı oku-duğ-umuz] -u  
 Ali we -GEN book-ACC read-FN-1.PL -ACC  
 bil -iyor  
 know-PRES.PROG (null 3.SG. *Agr*)  
 ‘Ali knows that we read the book’

- (2) Ali [biz -im kitab -ı oku-ma-mız] -ı  
 Ali we -GEN book-ACC read-NFN-1.PL -ACC  
 isti -yor  
 want-PRES.PROG (null 3.SG. *Agr*)  
 ‘Ali wants that we should read the book’

Terminology: Perhaps also “nominal indicative” versus “nominal subjunctive”?

Possessive phrase:

- (3) Ali -nin kitab -ı biz -im kitab -ımız  
 Ali -GEN book -3.SG we -GEN book -1.PL  
 ‘Ali’s book’ ‘Our book’
- (4) a. Öğrenci -ler [Ali -nin kitab -ın]-ı oku-du-lar  
 student -PL Ali -GEN book-3. SG- ACC read-PST-3.PL  
 ‘The students read Ali’s book’
- b. Öğrenci -ler [biz -im kitab -ımız]-ı oku-du-lar  
 student -PL we -GEN book-1. SG -acc read-PST-3.PL  
 ‘The students read our book’

(5) Two main agreement paradigms: “nominal” and “verbal”:

|       | Nominal  | Verbal |
|-------|----------|--------|
| 1.sg. | -(I)m    | -Im    |
| 2.sg. | -(I)n    | -sIn   |
| 3.sg. | -(s)I(n) | -Ø     |
| 1.pl. | -(I)mIz  | -Iz    |
| 2.pl. | -(I)nIz  | -sInIz |
| 3.pl. | -lArI(n) | -lAr   |

Verbal clause—root and embedded:

(6) (Biz) bu kitab -ı oku -yor -uz.  
 We this book -ACC read -PRES.PROG -1. PL  
 ‘We are reading this book.’

(7) Müfettiş-ler [(biz) bu kitab -ı oku -yor -uz]  
 inspector- PL we this book -ACC read -PRES.PROG -1. PL  
 san -iyor (-lar)  
 believe- PRES.PROG -PL  
 ‘The inspectors believe we are reading this book.’

Generalization: Nominalized clauses and possessive phrases are similar in the following respects:

- A. Their specifiers (i.e. the subject of the embedded clause and the possessor in a possessive phrase) are marked with the genitive (in contrast: the specifier of a tensed, “verbal” clause has nominative case);
- B. They are headed by a nominal agreement marker (which licenses a “nominal” subject/specifier case, i.e. the genitive in contrast: a tensed, “verbal” clause is headed by a “verbal” agreement marker);
- C. They bear a case marker on their respective heads; that case marker is licensed by the root verb (or a postposition) (in contrast: a “verbal” embedded clause is not externally marked with a case morpheme).

**Proposal 1** (cf. also Kornfilt 1984): An identical functional projection for clauses (at least nominalized clauses) and possessive phrases: Agr[+N]-P. (Corresponds essentially to Abney’s DP in Abney 1987.) — Later: The same analysis also for verbal clauses, which are Agr[+V]-P, i.e. differs only in the category feature of the head (and thus of the projection), but otherwise has a similar structure.

**Proposal 2:** The “subject case” (or specifier case) is licensed by the head, which is Agr in all instances. When it is Agr[+N], the specifier Case licensed is Genitive. When the head is Agr[+V], the specifier Case licensed is Nominative. Otherwise, all three

construction types (i.e. possessive phrases, nominalized clauses, and tensed “verbal” clauses) are similar, and they are all AgrPs.

### 3. Parallels between nominalized and verbal clauses:

#### A. Both are fully propositional and can accommodate the full array of their respective predicates’ argument structure:

Verbal clause (root and embedded):

- (8) a. Ali her sabah ev -in-den okul-a arkadaş-lar-ı-yla  
Ali every morning home-3.SG-ABL school-DAT friend -PL-3.SG-COMIT

gid-er.

go-AOR

‘Ali goes every morning from his home to school with his friends.’

- b. [Ali her sabah ev -in-den okul-a arkadaş-lar-ı-yla  
Ali every morning home-3.SG-ABL school-DAT friend -PL-3.SG-COMIT

gid-er] diye] bil -iyor -um.

go-AOR ‘saying’ know- PRES.PROG-1. SG

‘I know that Ali goes every morning from his home to school with his friends.’

Nominalized embedded clause:

- (9) [Ali-nin her sabah ev -in-den okul-a arkadaş-lar-ı-yla  
Ali-GEN every morning home-3.SG-ABL school-DAT friend -PL-3.SG-COMIT

git-tiğ-in]-i bil -iyor -um.

go-FN-3.SG -ACC know-PRES.PROG-1. SG

‘I know that Ali goes every morning from his home to school with his friends.’

#### B. Both types of clauses can have predicates with overt passive morphology (thus showing the syntactic nature of passive and clausal architecture of both clausal types; lexical argument-changing nominalization processes don’t “need” passive morphology to change argument structure):

- (10) Ali anne -si tarafından çok sev -il -iyor.  
Ali mother-3.SG by very love -PASS - PRES.PROG  
‘Ali is loved very much by his mother.’

- (11) [Ali -nin anne -si tarafından çok  
 Ali -GEN mother-3.SG by very  
 sev -il -diğ -in] -i bil -iyor -um.  
 love -PASS -FN -3.SG -ACC know-PRES.PROG-1.SG  
 'I know that Ali is loved very much by his mother.'

Lexical nominalization (internal argument externalized by the nominalization marker; passive morpheme not necessary):

- (11)' Kuzu -nun kavur -ma -sı  
 lamb -GEN roast -RES -3.SG  
 'Roast lamb' (=The result of a lamb being roasted)

**C. Both types of clauses can host sentential ("speaker-oriented") adverbs, and the verbs in both types can have modal suffixes:**

- (12) Oya herhalde Ali -yi sev -e -me -yecek.  
 Oya probably Ali -ACC love -ABIL -NEG -FUT  
 'Oya will probably be unable to love Ali.'

- (13) [Oya -nin herhalde Ali -yi  
 Oya -GEN probably Ali -ACC  
 sev -e -me -yeceğ -in] -i kimse-ye söyle -me -di -m.  
 love -ABIL -NEG -FUT.NOM-3.SG-ACC nobody-DAT tell -NEG -PST -1.SG  
 'I didn't tell anybody that Oya will probably be unable to love Ali.'

**D. Both need overt agreement on their predicates for *pro*-subjects to be licensed (not even "weak" agreement is sufficient):**

- (14) a. Asker -ler savaş -ta öl -ecek (-ler)  
 soldier-PL war -LOC die -FUT (-{3.}PL)  
 'The soldiers will die in the war.'

- b. *pro* savaş -ta öl -ecek \*(-ler)  
 war -LOC die -FUT (-{3.}PL)  
 '([They]) will die in the war.' (Note: this example is fine, without the 3. plural agr. morpheme, if *pro* is interpreted as a third sg., not a third pl. pronominal.)

- (15) [Asker -ler -in savaş -ta öl -ecek (-ler)-in]-e  
 soldier-PL -GEN war -LOC die -FUT.NOM (-PL)-3.-DAT  
 inan -ıyor -um  
 believe- PRES.PROG -1. SG  
 'I believe that the soldiers will die in the war.'

- (16) [*pro* savař -ta öl -ecek \*(-ler)-in]-e  
war -LOC die -FUT.NOM (-PL)-3.- DAT

inan -ıyor -um  
believe- PRES.PROG -1.SG

'I believe that they will die in the war.' (Note: Leaving out the plural part of the 3.pl. agreement form and thus making the *Agr* morphology "weak" leads to ill-formedness, if *pro* is to be interpreted as 3. pl. The weak *Agr* form is fine for *pro* interpreted as 3.sg.)

**E. The same is true for *pro*-specifiers of possessive phrases, i.e. for *pro*-possessors:**

- (17) a. Komřu-lar [*pro* ev \*(-ler)-in] -i biz-e  
neighbor-PL house - PL -3. -ACC we- DAT  
emanet et -ti (-ler)  
entrust do -PST (-PL)  
'The neighbors entrusted us their home.'

But OK:

- (17) b. [Komřu -lar -in ev -in]-i temizle -di -m.  
neighbor -PL -GEN house-3.-ACC clean -PST -1SG  
'I cleaned the house of the neighbors.'

**F. Agreement is important for overt specifiers, as well—both for verbal and nominal clauses:**

The nominative cannot be licensed on the subject of a "verbal" clause, if the "verbal" agreement is not realized on the predicate:

- (18) a. [Sen sınav-ı ge -ti -n] san -ıyor -um.  
You (NOM) test-ACC pass - PST -2.SG believe- PRES.PROG -1.SG  
'I believe you passed the test.'

- b. \*[Sen sınav-ı ge -ti ] san -ıyor -um.  
You (NOM) test-ACC pass - PST believe-PRES.PROG -1.SG  
Intended: 'I believe you passed the test.'

The source of the ill-formedness is not morphological; in SOR/ECM contexts, it is possible to leave out the agreement morpheme on the embedded "verbal" predicate, as long as the subject of the embedded clause is in the accusative rather than the nominative:

- c. [Sen -i<sub>i</sub> [ t<sub>i</sub> sınav-ı ge -ti ] san -ıyor -um.

You -ACC                      test-ACC pass   - PST            believe- PRES.PROG -1.SG  
 'I believe you to have passed the test.'

Likewise, in a nominal clause, when the (nominal) agreement on the embedded (nominalized) predicate is missing, an overt subject is not possible; claim: because the subject needs Case, but none is licensed. Depending on syntactic context, a PRO subject may be possible, but no other type of subject is:

- (19) a. Ben [Ali-nin hastalan-ma -sın]-dan kork-uyor-um.  
           I     Ali-GEN        fall ill -NFN   -3.SG -ABL    fear- PRES.PROG -1.SG  
           'I am afraid that Ali may get sick.'
- b. \*Ben [Ali-nin hastalan-ma (-k/-Ø)-tan kork-uyor-um.  
           I     Ali-GEN        fall ill -NFN   -INF   -ABL    fear- PRES.PROG -1.SG  
           'I am afraid that Ali may get sick.'
- c. Ben<sub>i</sub> [PRO<sub>i</sub> hastalan-ma -k -tan kork-uyor-um.  
           I     PRO    fall ill -NFN   -INF -ABL        fear- PRES.PROG -1.SG  
           'I am afraid to get sick.'

Similar facts hold of irrealis RCs, whose subject can only be PRO, given that the predicate of the modifying clause does not bear agreement morphology:

- (20) a. Ben [[PRO iç-ecek] güzel bir bira] bul -du -m.  
           I     PRO    drink-IRR    nice a beer        find -PST   -1.SG  
           'I found a nice beer to drink.'
- b. \*Ben [[sen /sen-in iç-ecek] güzel bir bira] bul -du -m.  
           I     you (NOM)/you-GEN drink-IRR    nice a beer find-PST -1.SG  
 Intended: 'I found a nice beer (for) you to drink.'

(20b) needs to be expressed in such a way that the beneficiary is a non-subject, and the subject of the modifier clause is PRO:

- c. Ben san-a [[PRO iç-ecek] güzel bir bira] bul -du -m.  
           I     you -DAT PRO    drink-IRR    nice a beer find-PST -1.SG  
           'I found you a nice beer to drink.'

Or else, in an embedded nominalized clause with overt agreement, the beneficiary can show up as a genitive subject:

- (21) a. Ben [[sen-in iç -me-n] için] güzel bir bira bul -du -m.  
           I     you-GEN drink-NFN-2.SG for nice a beer find- PST -1.SG  
           'I found a nice beer for your drinking' (i.e. 'I found a nice beer for you to drink/so that you (might) drink (it).')

- b. Ben [sen-in iç -eceğ-in / iç -ebil-eceğ-in ]  
 I you-GEN drink-FUTFN-2. SG/ drink -ABIL-FUTFN-2. SG

güzel bir bira bul -du -m.  
 nice a beer find- PST -1.SG

'I found a nice beer you will be drinking/you will be able to drink'

Proposal (cf. Kornfilt & Whitman 2011): The licenser of the genitive subject in nominalized clauses (and phrases) is [nominal] T + Agr, and the genitive subject in Spec, TP (or Spec,AgrP) is accessible to it.

- (22)
- ```

      CP
      / \
C[nom] TP

      / \
Ali-nin T+Agr'
Ali- GEN

      / \
V+T+Agr[nom] vP
oku-duğ-u
read-FN-3.SG
  
```

This is similar to possessive phrases, although those don't have C, nor T. But they do have a nominal *Agr*, and thus their genitive specifier (=the possessor) is accessible to it.

#### 4. Differences between clauses: argument / adjunct asymmetries, not found in possessive phrases

Overt subjects of gerundive adjunct clauses without agreement are licensed via *default* Case (i.e. they don't carry *licensed* Case):

- (23) [Ali iş -e gid -erken ] biz  
 Ali[def.Case] work -DAT go -while we
- uyu -yor -du -k  
 sleep - PRES.PROG -PST -1.PL

'While Ali was going to work, we were sleeping.'

This default Case is unavailable in argument clauses (as already seen in (19b) and (20b)):

- (24) Ali<sub>i</sub> [PRO<sub>i</sub> / \*Oya yarış-ı kazan -ma-k ] iste -di  
 Ali Oya[def.Case] race-ACC win - NFN -INF want - PST  
 OK: 'Ali wanted to win the race'; \*: 'Ali wanted for Oya to win the race'



I extend this mechanism of default Case to adjunct clauses that do have agreement, showing that even in the presence of agreement morphology, Subject Case is independent from agreement in adjunct clauses, and is default Case:

(25) [[Oya/\*Oya-**nın** yarış-ı kazan-**dığ**-ı] için]  
Oya[**def.Case**]/\*Oya-**GEN** race-ACC win- **FN-3.SG**[+N] because

Ali sevin-di  
Ali rejoice-PST

‘Ali was happy because Oya won the race’

Adjunct clauses with agreement exhibit a dichotomy: when there is an (abstract) A’-operator, as e.g. in comparatives (cf. (26)) and relative clauses, the agreement does get “activated”, and the subject is assigned genitive, rather than the default (nominative) case: the operator turns adjunct clauses into “referential” entities (Rizzi 1994):

(26) Ali [/\*Oya /Oya -**nın** ye -**dığ** -**in** -den] fazla]  
Ali Oya[**def.Case**]/Oya -**GEN** eat -**FN-3.SG**[+N] -ABL more

balık ye-di  
fish eat-PST

‘Ali ate more fish than Oya did’

This variable behavior is exhibited only by “hybrid” nominalized clauses, i.e. the nominalized factive/indicative clauses which we claimed have nominalized high functional heads and their projections, such as nominal C and T. The non-factive nominalized clauses which have no C, and no tense (only aspect), and possessive phrases, which have none of these three functional categories (cf. Kornfilt 2006), exhibit only genitive specifiers:

Non-factive (=subjunctive) nominalized embedding:

(27) [[\*Oya/Oya-**nın** yarış-ı kazan-**ma**-sı] için]  
\*Oya[**def.Case**]/Oya-**GEN** race-ACC win- **NFN-3.SG**[+N] for

Ali hakem-e rüşvet ver-di  
Ali umpire-DAT bribe give-PST

‘Ali bribed the umpire for Oya to win the race’

Possessive phrase:

(28) a. Ahmet [Ali-nin kız -in ]-ı tanı -yor  
Ahmet Ali-**GEN** daughter -3.SG -ACC know- PRES.PROG  
‘Ahmet knows Ali’s daughter.’

- b. Ahmet kolye -yi [[Ali-nin kız -ı] için] al -dı  
 Ahmet necklace-ACC Ali- GEN daughter-3.SG for buy -PST  
 'Ahmet bought the necklace for Ali's daughter.'

Kornfilt (2006): Overt Agr in Turkish determines subject/specifier Case (if Agr nominal, specifier Case nominal = genitive; if Agr verbal, specifier Case verbal – nominative); but only where Agr is itself licensed as a subject Case licenser. This licensing takes place either internally, in a homogeneously nominal domain (as in C- and T-less nominalized subjunctives and possessive phrases), or else by raising into the n-head of an *nP*-shell that dominates categorially hybrid domains (and makes assignment of Rizzi-type “referentiality” possible). Adjuncts are ModPs (cf. Rubin 2003) and can't be *nPs*, with which they are in complementary distribution. A nominal Agr in a categorially hybrid *ModP* domain thus has no n-head to raise to and consequently remains unlicensed as a (nominal) subject Case (=genitive) licenser. Default Case applies instead, as a last resort. However, when such a hybrid adjunct *ModP* has an operator, the level of CP gets activated, and a *nP* gets projected as a result, just like in argument hybrid clauses.

### 5. Differences between certain high nominalizations and homophonous low nominals with respect to “suspended affixation”, and the issue of a word's lexical integrity

- (29) [[[Ali-nin ördeğ-i kızar-t] -ıp [krema-yı don -dur]]-ma-sın]-ı  
 Ali- GEN duck-ACC roast-CAUS-and cream-ACC freeze-CAUS -NFN-3.SG -ACC

söyle -di -m.  
 tell -PST -1.SG  
 'I said for Ali to roast the duck and freeze the cream.'

The subjunctive (non-factive) nominalization and the agreement suffix (as well as the case suffix) have been “suspended” and distribute successfully over the conjuncts. Carafe Cesar

A suffix homophonous with the non-factive nominalization suffix, with resultative meaning, can't be suspended:

- (30) a. don -dur -ma  
 freeze-CAUS -RESULT  
 'ice cream'
- b. kızar -t -ma  
 roast- CAUS - RESULT  
 'fried/roasted food'

(31) \*don -dur -up kızar -t -ma  
freeze-CAUS -AND roast- CAUS - RESULT

Ill-formed under the intended reading: 'Ice cream and roasted meat' (but good under the reading 'freezing and roasting')

### References:

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