CHAPTER 6

RELATIVE CLAUSES AND PASSIVE CONSTRUCTIONS IN TURKISH: A COGNITIVE LINGUISTIC APPROACH

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INTRODUCTION

Cognitive linguistics is an interdisciplinary field that emphasizes that some constructions in a given language need contextual clues owing to nature of fuzzy categorization in human mind (Croft & Cruse, 2004: Evans, 2006: Ungerer & Schmidt, 2013). Thus, language is not seen as an absolute and ideal system. Rather, it is seen as a dynamic competitive process that is incomplete because of the problems experienced in conceptualization and categorization. It is important to unearth the patterns of conceptualization. The fuzziness of categorization can be seen in linguistic production, and some aspects of certain grammatical constructions are competitive in nature. Therefore, frequency and salience appear as pivotal elements in determining which construction is used while referring to meaning. In addition, interactive and social function of language is taken into consideration. Therefore, context matters when form and meaning alone are insufficient. Although conceptual prototypes may play a role in predicting the possible constructions, it may not always be possible to predict all the underlying usages or meanings due to the nature of competitiveness. Each grammatical construction may show

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varying degrees of centrality and peripherality on a continuum (Croft & Cruse, 2004: Evans, 2006: Ungerer & Schmidt, 2013). Categories such as fuzziness and family resemblance in psychology can be applied to each linguistic category ranging from lexis to syntax including morphology. Constructional profiling in terms of agent and patient imply attention or windowing. Attention in psychology is related to profiling in cognitive linguistics (Croft & Cruse, 2004: Evans, 2006: Ungerer & Schmidt, 2013). In addition, cognitive linguistics takes usage-based grammar into account because in psychology and cognitive neuroscience as well, participants are asked about the nature of words, concepts and categories. Cognitive linguistics can benefit from corpus-driven or corpus-based data in order to refer to usage-based construction grammar or work with participants who can give clues about language. Construal or projected reality instead of objectivist semantics is obtained through the data collected from human participants or corpora. Participants construe reality in a certain way, and thus realities cannot be absolutely objective in cognitive linguistics. Lexicon-grammar continuum is adopted instead of hierarchical relations and transformations in generative grammar (Croft & Cruse, 2004: Evans, 2006: Ungerer & Schmidt, 2013). Each construction is regarded as unique and specific. Therefore, universal generalizations may not be possible for each grammatical or lexical construction. Semantics is prioritized in the analysis of grammar or in other words constructions (Croft & Cruse, 2004: Evans, 2006: Ungerer & Schmidt, 2013). Approaching linguistic constructions from the perspective of cognitive linguistics entails dealing with the same problem from a psychological point of view based on the findings of cognitive neuroscience and the problems discussed in philosophy of language. Some linguistic problems may be based on the fuzzy categorization, varying degrees of centrality, prototypical features or family resemblance. Therefore, these terms used in psychology may shed light on the problems in linguistics.

Cognitive linguistics also aims to bring examples from typological research in order to show variations and possible generalizations if any (Croft, 2001). From Chomskyan perspective, the linguists aim to find universals in all the languages spoken in the world. However, cognitive linguistics approaches constructions with an interdisciplinary perspective instead of behaving linguistic expressions from a pure formalist viewpoint. Therefore, it remains pivotal to compare various or similar constructions from different languages (Comrie, 1989)

THE TURKISH LANGUAGE

Turkish is an agglutinative language using suffixes and prioritizes vowel harmony in linguistic production and acquisition (Kornfilt, 1997; Slobin & Zimmer, 1986; Underhill, 1976). Turkish does not mark or specify gender and does not have any definite article as in European languages. Syntactic constructions are projected and used with the help of morphological markers, which are generally suffixes or endings (Kornfilt, 1997; Underhill, 1976).. Thus, morphosyntactic relations are prevalent in Turkey Turkish. Case-marking system of Turkish renders canonical word order of S O V flexible. However, the use of some suffixes may be problematic because of the nature of fuzzy categorization and partial profiling. Therefore, Turkish needs contextual clues in some cases in order to lessen the effect of fuzziness as this case may apply to other languages. Thus, it can be said that suffixes used in syntactic or verbal constructions may need contextual clues so that speakers can understand each other. The world knowledge of speakers facilitates their understanding of linguistic constructions even if they are partially projected.

This study aims to examine relative clause and passive (especially double passive) constructions in order to show that without contextual clues or a strong semantic and syntactic background

in its literal (semantic) and canonical (word order) sense, one may not understand the meaning of these constructions clearly. The suffix used in RC construction in object position depends on the speaker`s conceptual and linguistic knowledge of the related verbs, while the suffixes used in passive constructions are competitive and are open to various interpretations. The idea endorsed in this study emanates from the tenets of cognitive linguistics and construction grammar emphasizing the importance of some terms such as fuzziness in categorization, constructional profile, family resemblance, prototype and metaphor.

SUFFIXES IN RELATIVE CLAUSES IN TURKISH

Relative clauses (RC) are generally examined in terms of hierarchical relations processability or distance because modifying a noun with a clause containing a certain verb seems to be a complex issue for some linguists (De Vries, 2002; Diessel, 2004, 2007; Ekmekçi, 1990; Hamilton, 1994, 1995; Hawkins, 1999; Kayne, 1994; Keenan & Comrie, 1977; Kornfilt, 2000; O'Grady, 2011; Özçelik, 2006; Tarollo & Myhill, 1983; Wiechmann, 2015). Nouns in their own nature tend to show co-locality, resemblance and associations at varying degrees. However, when a clause to modify a noun is at work, some conceptual difficulties may emerge. In Turkish, there are only two suffixes that modify a noun at a clausal level (Kornfilt, 2000). These two kinds of suffixes are composed of – en/an referring to RC in subject position and dık/dik denoting RC in object position. Any head noun (animate, inanimate, human, non-human, object or any entity) used in subjective position in RC constructions is modified by –en/an suffix. However, in object positions, all the head nouns unlike those in European languages, take dık/dik without needing any preposition because RC in object position may take prepositions. However, in Turkish, RC in object position does not take prepositions at all. The meaning

is understood through the help of context. Thus, we can say that conceptual projection is obtained without linguistic marking.

Table 1. Canonical and Object Relative Clause Word Order in Turkish	
Turkish Canonical Word Order	Non-Subject Relative Clause in Turkish
Mektub- **u** yaz di- m Letter – **ACC** write PAST 1SG	Yaz- **duğu m** letter Write **PART** 1SG book
Kent- **te** yaşı yor um City – **LOC** live PROG 1SG	Yaşa- **dığı m** kent Live **PART** 1SG city
Oda- **dan** çık ti m Room – **ABL** get out of PAST 1SG	Çık- **tığı m** oda Get out of **PART** 1SG room
Okul- **ye** git ti m School- **DAT** go PAST 1SG	Git - **tiği m** kafe go **PART** 1SG school
Adam- **la** konuş tu m Man – **INSTR** speak past 1SG	Konuş- **tuğu m** adam speak **PART** 1SG man

RC in canonical order takes various cases composed of accusative, locative, ablative, dative and instrumental. However, these cases in RC with object position disappear and are not projected onto linguistic forms in an elaborate manner. Rather, the conceptual framework signifying specific postpositional features in canonical word order is not observed in RC with object position unless it is obligatory to use it for making meaning much clearer and the message far more understandable for speakers. Therefore, it is possible that Turkish speakers depend on the prototypical features of the constructions in canonical word order, which shows that they have a strong experiential background in the use of verbs that take certain cases. However, this case cannot be applied to European languages, specifically German, English and French as well as Syrian Arabic since the cases in their canonical word order are also projected when they are used in object position in RC constructions.

The relative clause hypotheses are mentioned in terms of a degree of difficulty. It is obvious that a few things affect whether two independent clauses are bound together. The asymmetry of these structures can be used to explain why relative clauses in object position are relatively challenging to acquire. Croft (2001) highlighted the importance of usage and frequency, emphasizing that these elements should be given attention in typological studies.

SUFFIXES IN PASSIVE CONSTRUCTION

Passive constructions in Turkish take two kinds of suffixes consisting of –l and –n (Çiçek , 2008: Özkaragöz; 1986: Sebzecioğlu, 2008: Taneri, 1993: Yilmaz, 2001). However, in certain cases, these two suffixes may be used to denote reflexive meaning. The suffix –l refers to passive, reflexive, reciprocal and inchoative constructions based on the nature of verbs and context (Taneri, 1993). Thus, the use of –l suffix in verbs competes in terms of semantic and pragmatic meaning. One may hardly decide whether some verbs taking one of these suffixes refer to passive or reflexivity without any contextual clues. The dilemma is that passive construction refers to a non-agentive state and that reflexive one to an agentive state. It is interesting that the same suffixes refer to both states at the same time. In order to understand whether some verbs are related to passivization or reflexive construction, one needs contextual clues in Turkey Turkish. Yılmaz (2001) mentions more than 100 verbs that are related to both passive and reflexive constructions. When reciprocal and inchoative senses are taken into account, the number of the verbs given by Yilmaz (2001) may dramatically rise, which refers to competitiveness in the use of this suffix.

It is hard to map four distinct senses. However, there may be one or two images underlying these distinct senses. The following examples were adopted from Taneri (1993).

Construction Type	Sentences
Passive	Peynir kes-il-miş. cheese cut-pass-past 'The cheese was cut.'
Reflexive	Adam bay-ıl-dı Man faint – l- past 'The man fainted.'
Reciprocal	Babam ve ben sar- ıl- dık Dad- POS and I - Embrace --(I)L – Past- 1Pl 'Dad and I embraced each other.'
Inchoative	Saçı ince-l-di. Her + hair- POS- thin-(I)L-PAST 'Her hair got thin'

The suffix –l and –n seem to compete in four distinct senses. Although various explanations have been presented in the related literature, most of them approach the problem from a formalist perspective. What is important is to find the diachronic process of the passive suffix and its semantic expansion. In order to reach the possible prototypes or literal meaning of constructions, a diachronic approach can contribute to the understanding of the problems emanating from a synchronic perspective. It is important to know the limits of each constriction when one specific suffix used and to unearth the constructional profile or prototypical features of the suffix –l or –n. The psychological background of the usage of these two suffixes possibly derived from the same word or suffix may help researchers understand how these distinct senses are prototypically or metaphorically related if there is any link between them.

It is interesting that a person utters a sentence regarding an entity exposed a certain change in nature but linguists or speakers have difficulty categorizing or classifying this construction and cannot

decide whether it is a passive, reflexive or inchoative construction. One often needs to infer meaning resulting from these fuzzy constructions in order to understand the constructional profile or prototypical features. The typicality of the suffix –l and –n can be investigated so as to comprehend which sense is more typical for these two suffixes because from a psychological account, some features of certain objects in the world are more typical or more atypical when compared to other features in the category. Degrees of typicality or degrees of centrality of a certain sense can be found based on the usage-based construction grammar. The relationship between the agentive and the nature of verb in terms of semantic features may be hard to understand in some cases or examples. Thus, the specific examples may function as constructions that may have specific features which emerge only in that context. We are faced with four distinct senses in one suffix. These distinct senses may be radial if one can prove the constructional profile of these four distinct senses. However, one also needs to think that these senses may remain vague and fuzzy. If the nature of entities and the relationship between these entities are hard or complex to categorize, then it is normal to encounter such a difficulty in interpreting four distinct senses in the use of the suffix –l or –n because the fuzziness might be at work while conceptualizing the expansive meaning of the aforementioned suffix. As Labov (1973) states,

> The subjective aspect of vagueness (i.e. fuzziness in our terminology) may be thought of as the lack of certainty as to whether the term does or does not denote; and this may be transformed into the consistency with which a given sample of speakers does in fact apply the term. (353)

CONCLUSION

This study aimed to problematize the suffixes used in RC and passive constructions from a cognitive linguistic perspective. Since categorization is mainly fuzzy, it is important to bring certain

explanations to this fuzzy world and linguistic expressions. A mere synchronic perspective may not be sufficient to understand the complexity of the suffixes used in RC and passive or passive-related constructions. The relationship between passive, reflexive, reciprocal and inchoative verbs can be unearthed by taking the conceptual framework in cognitive linguistics into consideration because the relationship between figure and ground and the link between trajectory, landmark and path may enable researchers to re-think about the constructional profiling of RC and passive constructions.

Instead of behaving and approaching the problem within the framework of unprincipled polysemy or prototype, it might be more productive to understand the underlying mechanism and images of the independently distributed meanings by using the conceptual framework in cognitive linguistics. In addition, usage-based data might produce more reasonable explanations regarding the nature of RC and passive suffixes that cause complexity for linguistic research. The relationship between linguistic production and psychological explanations can be studied and established in order to understand how human mind works at syntactic and lexical level while projecting and construing reality. Construal of reality can be based on our physical embodiment. Thus, embodied mind might be at work and even help researchers understand why and how certain constructions become exposed to unstructured expansion or disappearance. What enables speakers to understand each other hardly results from pure formal linguistic production but rather contextual clues and pragmatic functions that take place through interaction or socialization. Future research can focus on collecting data from speakers to obtain more reliable and valid explanations about the nature of the suffixes that cannot be understood without context. In addition, corpus-based or corpus-driven research can give better explanations about the frequency

and salience of the constructions used. Besides, a diachronic perspective can be endorsed with corpus-based or corpus-driven research. From a methodological viewpoint, certain elicitation tasks can be used to comprehend what and how speakers interpret the constructions given to them. In so doing, instead of making intuitive explanations regarding the complex issues in linguistics, it might be better to endorse them with real data obtained from corpora or human subjects.

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