# Dative Ablative Alternation in Turkish: The Role of Aspect

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#### **Abstract**

In Turkish there are some verbs such as *utan* 'to be ashamed', *kork* 'to fear', *çekin* 'to refrain', and ürk 'to have a fright' whose complements nominalized with -mAK are compatible with both DAT and ABL cases (Göksel & Kerslake, 2014). These verbs can also have regular DP complements which are only ABL. This type of verbs is classified as lexical case assigning verbs (Woolford, 2006). It is shown that the case alternation is not random, and the reading differences between the two cases are associated with Aspect of the embedded clause. **Disclaimer:** this is a "recreated" version of the paper. Only the abstract, keywords, and the contact information is modified.

Keywords: turkish, case, alternation, aspect

## 1 Introduction

This paper provides a very small set of verbs in Turkish which have case alternation between two idiosyncratic cases for their clausal internal argument. My aim is to point out the configurations where the case assignment becomes more rigid and to provide possible structural analyses. The implications of such data presented here is related to the discussions of case theory in Woolford (2006), and Pesetsky and Torrego (2004) in general and to the discussion of case in Turkish in Öztürk (2005).

This part begins with introducing the verbs that can have case alternation, and the conditions under which it is possible. It continues with some background into nominalization, some functional heads in Turkish, and an analysis of case.

## 1.1 Turkish case alternating verbs

The verbs that can assign both DAT and ABL to their clausal argument are given in Göksel and Kerslake (2014). These verbs are: *kork* 'to fear', *ürk*, 'to be startled', *çekin* 'to refrain', and *utan* 'to be ashamed'. However these verbs only assign ABL to their non-clausal DP arguments, a set of examples for the verb *utan* 'to be ashamed' is given in (1). No other verb that assigns idiosyncratic ABL to its argument has case alternation (2).

(1) a. Ev-e ( $PRO_i$ )  $git-me\breve{g}-e/ten$   $utan-di-m_i$ . home-DAT  $PRO_i$  go-NMLZ-DAT/ABL be\_ashamed-PST-1SG 'I was ashamed to go home.'

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Glosses: 1 = first person, 2 = second person, 3 = third person, ABL = ablative, ACC = accusative, AOR = aorist, AUX = auxiliary, DAT = dative, FUT = future, GEN = genitive, NEG = negative, NMLZ = nominalizer, NOM = nominative, PART = partitive, PL = plural, PP = past participle, PRF = perfect, PROG = progressive, PROS = prospective, PST = past, RES = resultative, SG = singular.

- b. *Köpek-\*e/ten utan-dı-m* dog-\*DAT/ABL be\_ashamed-PST-1SG 'I was ashamed of the dog.'
- (2) a. Sen-\*e/den hoşlan-dı-m. 2SG-\*DAT/ABL like-PST.1SG 'I liked you.'
  - b. Ev-e ( $PRO_i$ ) git-mek-\*e/ten hoşlan- $di-m_i$ . home-DAT  $PRO_i$  go-NMLZ-\*DAT/ABL like-PST-1SG 'I liked going home.'
  - c. \*Ev-e (pro<sub>i</sub>) gid-me/eceğ/diğ-im-e hoşlan-dı-m<sub>i</sub>. home-DAT pro<sub>i</sub> go-NMLZ/FUT/PP-1SG-DAT like-PST-1SG

The interpretation for the cases these verbs assign falls into non-structural idiosyncratic cases under Woolford (2006)'s classification. The verbs can have case alternation only for their control -mAK (NMLZ in glosses) clausal arguments. Other nominalizers -dIK, -(y)AcAK(PP and FUT in glosses), and the non-control variant of -mAK taking agreement suffixes do not allow case alternation (3).

(3) Ev-e (pro<sub>i</sub>) git-me/tiğ/eceğ-im-\*e/den kork-tu-m<sub>i</sub>.
home-DAT pro<sub>i</sub> go-NMLZ/PP/FUT-1SG-\*DAT/ABL fear-PST-1SG
NMLZ/FUT: 'I feared I would go home (as a result of something).'
PP: 'I was afraid because I went home.'

### 1.2 Nominalizers in Turkish

The nominalizers relevant for this paper are -dIK, -(y)AcAK, and -mAK with control and non-control variants. Erguvanlı-Taylan (1998) puts forward some observations about these nominalizers under their Modality and Tense settings. For example contrasting -mAK and -dIK may result in modality difference for the clausal argument and contrasting -dIK and -(y)AcAK may result in tense difference (4). However this is not always the case, in some configurations the modality or tense difference may not arise as in (5). Resulting in these nominalizers functioning as ordering the aspects of main clause and the clausal argument.

- (4) a. *O-nun* gece çalış-tığ-ın-ı düşün-me-di-m. 3SG-GEN night work-PP-3SG-ACC think-NEG-1SG 'I did not think he worked at night.'
  - b. *O-nun* gece çalış-ma-sın-ı düşün-me-di-m. 3SG-GEN night work-NMLZ-3SG-ACC think-NEG-1SG 'I did not think he would work at night.'
  - c. Ev-e git-tiğ/eceğ-im-i bil-iyor. home-DAT go-PP/FUT-1SG-ACC know-PROG[3SG] 'S/he knows I went/will go home.'
- (5) a. Sen-in mezun ol-duğ-un-u gör-eceğ-im. 2SG-GEN graduation become-PP-2SG-ACC see-FUT-1SG 'I will see you graduate.'
  - b. *Sen-in düş-eceğ-in-i düşün-me-di-m*. 2SG-GEN fall-FUT-2SG-ACC think-NEG-PST-1SG 'I did not think you would fall.'

This is why a simple line can not be drawn between the case alternating -mAK and other nominalizers solely by modality or tense interpretations. However one can draw a line in their structural properties in terms of taking agreement suffixes. Case alternation is only observed with the control variant of -mAK which does not take agreement suffixes as shown in (1a) and (3). The difference in having or not having agreement suffixes can be related directly to the size of the clausal argument, since it is the T head that agreement features are satisfied according to Chomsky (1995), Iatridou (1990), and Kural (1993) as cited in Öztürk (2001). This makes the control variant of -mAK as the smallest size of nominalizer out of all four.

## 1.3 Aspect in Turkish

Cinque (1999) claims that in all languages there are functional heads in derivation which are responsible for each Mood, Modality, Tense, and Aspect setting. These functional heads are hierarchical and can take scope over the other. According to (Cinque, 2001),  $-mI_{\S}$  is ambiguous between  $Asp_{Perfect}$  and  $Asp_{Resultative}$  (RES in glosses), also -(y)AcAK is ambiguous between  $T_{Future}$  and  $Asp_{Prospective}$  (PROS in glosses). These ambiguities place the two functional heads in different positions with regard to Negation, as in (6). Examples that confirm the ambiguous readings of these two suffixes  $-mI_{\S}$  and -(y)AcAK are given in (7).

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(6) Asp<sub>Prospective</sub> > NEG > Asp<sub>Resultative</sub>
-(y)AcAK > -mA > -mIş
(7) a. Ev-e git-miş ol-du.
home-DAT go-RES AUX-PST[3SG]
'It ended up as that he went home.'
b. Ev-e gid-ecek ol-du.
home-DAT go-PROS AUX-PST[3SG]
'He was on the brink of going home but he didn't.'
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The order presented in (6) will be the most relevant in  $\S 2$  and  $\S 3$ . For now suffice it to say that the readings for  $-mI_{\S}$  and -(y)AcAK being ambiguous are attestable as shown in (7). One issue with this analysis is that whenever NEG is present, it takes scope over all aspectual heads, even though linearly it can be followed by those heads. In a sense NEG resets the order of scope in the sentence, as shown in (8).

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(8) Kitab-ı oku-m-uyor.book-ACC read-NEG-PROG[3SG]'S/he is not reading the book.''*Her not reading the book is continuing.'
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# 1.4 Case analysis

In Pesetsky and Torrego (2004), the features of T order the event and the subevent.  $T_s$  is responsible for NOM and the event, while  $T_o$  is responsible for ACC and the subevent as illustrated in Figure 1.

This approach makes the prediction then, that the NOM marked argument should align with the main clause in Aspect, and the ACC marked argument should not necessarily align. Since the functional heads responsible for NOM and ACC are situated in the main and subevents respectively, the prediction holds true for clausal subject as in (9).

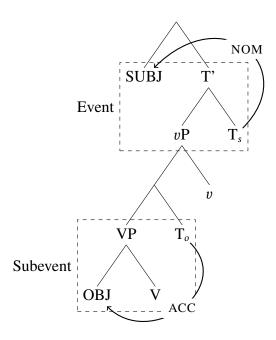


Figure 1: Analysis of case

(9) [Ev-e gel-mek] ben-i üz-müş/-er

Home-DAT comeNMLZ 1SG-ACC upset-PRF[3SG]/AOR[3SG]

PRF: 'Coming home upset me.'

Reading: 'I came home, apparently that upsets me.'

AOR: 'Coming home upsets me.'

Reading: 'Coming home, in general, upsets me.'

In both cases of ACC, the information about the Aspect of the clausal argument can not directly be drawn from the Aspect of the main clause. This is as expected, since the functional head  $T_o$  which is responsible for the subevent assigns ACC. The difference in the main Aspect of the clause does not necessarily affect the interpretation of the ACC marked argument.

(10) a. [Ev-e gel-meğ-i] özle-r-im. home-DAT come-NMLZ-ACC miss-AOR-1SG 'I miss coming home.'

b. [Ev-e gel-meğ-i] özle-di-m. home-DAT come-NMLZ-ACC miss-PST-1SG 'I missed coming home.'

# 2 Data

Here, I try to show the effects of case alternation in interpretation and put forward some examples for better addressing the interaction of case and functional heads, prominently Aspect. The main premise of this part is to introduce the reading changes depending on case.

It is already interesting that a verb can assign both idiosyncratic cases DAT and ABL to its clausal internal argument. At some point a decision need to be made for which case to have. A small insight into what regulates this case selection comes from the different readings depending on case (11).

```
(11) a. Para iste-meğ-e
                           utan-dı-m.
       money ask-NMLZ-DAT be_ashamed-PST-1SG
       'I was ashamed to ask for money.'
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b. Para iste-mek-ten utan-dı-m. money ask-NMLZ-ABL be\_ashamed-PST-1SG 'I was ashamed that I asked for money.'

The interpretations in (11) are relatively easy to get among native speakers. Yet, these interpretations need to be put in a firmer ground than just being interpretations. For this reason, I put overt Aspect heads in the clausal arguments (12).

```
(12) a. Para iste-miş ol-mak-*a/tan
                                       utan-dı-m.
       money ask-RES be-NMLZ-DAT/ABL be ashamed-PST-1SG
       'I was ashamed to have asked for money.'
     b. Para iste-yecek ol-may-a/?tan
                                          utan-dı-m.
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money ask-PROS be-NMLZ-DAT/?ABL be\_ashamed-PST-1SG

'I was ashamed to ask for money.'1

It is apparent that the interpretations have merit to them. As p<sub>Resultative</sub> favors ABL and  $Asp_{Prospective}$  favors DAT. Another supporting point to advance the paper's position comes from negated clausal arguments (13).

```
(13) Ev-e
              git-me-mek-*e/ten
                                     utan-dı-m.
    home-DAT go-NEG-NMLZ-*DAT/ABL be ashamed-PST-1SG
    'I was ashamed of not going home.' Reading: I did not go home
```

Observations made in (11), (12), and (13) shows that there is a structural interaction of functional heads and case.

#### 3 **Analysis**

In §1 and §2 I provided the necessary background into Turkish case alternating verbs, nominalizations, and reading differences in case choice. Here, I introduce an analysis Kratzer (2004) provides for German, in which uninterpretable ACC is related to interpretable Telicity, afterwards I give my proposal on case alternating verbs and claim that interpretable Aspect is related to uninterpretable case.

#### 3.1 **Interpretation and case**

Kratzer (2004) provides a semantic account of the relation between uninterpretable ACC and interpretable Telicity in German. While the claim itself does not provide separate functional heads for case and Telicity, Kratzer notes that uninterpretable features might be related in general to interpretable features, and higher levels like Modality on top of verbs. Öztürk (2005) provides an example from Turkish where the presence of ACC changes the Telicity reading (14).

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(14) a. Portakal-ı ye-di-m.
        orange-ACC eat-PST-1SG
        'I ate the orange.'
        Reading: 'I ate the whole orange'
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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>I thank the reviewer 3 for pointing out to their difference in grammaticality judgment. After I consulted with more native speakers they accepted the ABL reading but professed their tendency of DAT.

b. Portakal ye-di-morange eat-PST-1SG'I did orange eating.'Reading: 'I ate some amount of orange'

Now that there are tools of representing ACC (Pesetsky & Torrego, 2004), and Modality (Cinque, 1999) as separate functional heads, a representation of Kratzer's proposal and (14) can easily fit into a structural representation as in Figure 2. This shows that in Turkish there is a clear interaction going from uACC to iTelicity.

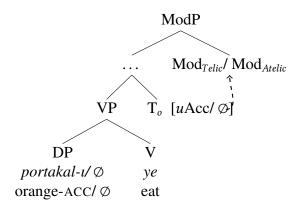


Figure 2: Turkish, ACC and Telicity

## 3.2 Proposal

This paper proposes that in case alternating verbs, the interpretable Aspect of the clausal internal argument is reflected as uninterpretable case. Mainly  $iAsp_{Resultative}$  gives way to uAblative and  $iAsp_{Prospective}$  or higher gives way to uDative (Figure 3). This representation captures the readings and functional configurations presented in (11), (12), and (13).

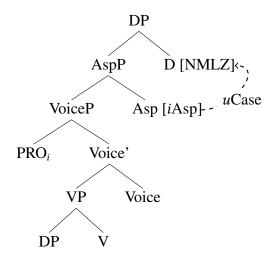


Figure 3: Case assignment in alternating cases

The implementations of this analysis is a change from other case alternations like those in Icelandic (Kiparsky, 1998) with PART-ACC, in Japanese (Nakamura, 2000) with DAT-NOM-GEN, and in Finnish (Svenonius, 2001) with DAT-ACC. Those alternations are between structural and non-structural cases unlike our two non-structural case alternation of DAT-ABL. They are also motivated by lexical aspect in the sense of Vendler (1957) and syntactic movements. A similar

example of case alternation and lexical aspect like those given in Kiparsky (1998) is also present in Turkish as in (15).

(15) a. Kuş-u/a vur-du-m.
bird-ACC/DAT hit-PST-1SG
ACC: 'I shot the bird dead.'
DAT: 'I shot at the bird.'

## 4 Discussion

(16) a. Ev-e

Given the interpretations and the functional settings for case alternating verbs, the analysis reflects how the relation between Aspect and case holds. The proposal builds on the observations made in §2, and tries to give an account that can cover the instances of case alternations. However this proposal can not be extended to other verbs that do not have case alternations. It is limited only to the case alternating verbs by design. Two issues regarding the analysis is worth addressing, one is the difficulty in interpretation for the verbs other than *utan* 'to be ashamed', and the other is using functional heads after the auxiliary verb *ol*- 'to become'.<sup>2</sup>

# 4.1 Difficulty in interpretation

An argument can be made against the readings in (11), because the same readings are not very conceivable for the other case alternating verbs like *kork* 'to fear', *çekin* 'to refrain', and *ürk* 'to be startled'. However they still respond the same to the overt Aspect and Negated configurations (16).

kork-tu-m.

home-DAT go-NEG-NMLZ-\*DAT/ABL fear-PST-1SG
'I was afraid I wouldn't go home.'

b. *Ev-e* git-miş ol-mağ-\*a/tan çekin-di-m.
home-DAT go-RES AUX-NMLZ-\*DAT/ABL refrain-PST-1SG
'I was afraid of having gone home.'

c. *Ev-e* gid-ecek ol-mağ-a/?tan ürk-üyor-um.

git-me-meğ-\*e/ten

home-DAT go-PROS AUX-NMLZ-DAT/?ABL be\_startled-PROG-1SG
'I am startled of almost going home.'

The reason behind not getting those interpretations might relate to our real world knowledge. In a sense, we do not usually carry out tasks we fear of doing. This might inhibit the interpretation of doing something and actually fearing it. However being ashamed is more maluable since we can feel ashamed of doing something, and we can also be ashamed of considering and getting pretty close to doing something. Nevertheless the functional configurations still act as predicted by the analysis.

# 4.2 Auxiliary verb ol and NEG raising

One of the reviewers brought up some examples that on the surface contradict the analysis provided in this paper. I present the examples given by the reviewer in (17)

 $<sup>^2</sup>$ A further point to discuss could be the Aspect marker -mAktA which is used for  $Asp_{Progressive}$  in Turkish. A diachronic account for it is given in Erdal (2004) where the Aspect marker -mAktA consists of the nominalizer -mAK and the Dative -DA (at that time of historical point the -DA was used as Dative). This might tell us that the nominalizer -mAK had some interactions with case before, and diachronically it formed  $Asp_{Progressive}$ . But given the scope of this paper being a synchronic analysis, it is not included in discussion.

(17) a. *Bu kitab-ı ok-uyor ol-mağ-a/tan utan-dı-m.* this book-ACC read-PROG AUX-NMLZ-\*DAT/ABL be\_ashamed-PST-1SG 'I was ashamed of reading this book.'

- b. *Bu kitab-ı oku-m-uyor ol-mağ-\*a/tan utan-dı-m.* this book-ACC read-NEG-PROG AUX-NMLZ-\*DAT/ABL be\_ashamed-PST-1SG 'I was ashamed of not reading this book.'
- c. Bu kitab-ı ok-uyor ol-ma-mağ-\*a/tan utan-dı-m. this book-ACC read-PROG AUX-NEG-NMLZ-\*DAT/ABL be\_ashamed-PST-1SG 'I was ashamed of not reading this book.'

In these examples the reviewer first points that in (17a) both cases are acceptable but with preference towards Dative. However the second point the reviewer makes is that (17c) is the neg-raised version of (17b). This contradicts both the order of Aspects and Negation provided in (6), and it also contradicts the analysis.

This issue needs an answer that deals with two things; the structural nature of the auxiliary verb and neg raising in it. There are two accounts for the auxiliary verb *ol*- that I can find, one is the light verb account provided in Key and Tat (2016) and the auxiliary verb account provided in Göksel (2001). In the first account *ol*- is taken to be a Voice head that takes a small clause. In the second account though, things are more nuanced. To provide a small summary, suffice it to say that the auxiliary verb can become syntactically active in creating layers of 'visibility' or 'invisibility'. This can be reflected in the use of *ol* in ORCs and main clauses provided in (18).

- (18) a. *Hatta bu bölüm-ü anla-mış bile ol-du-k*. in\_fact this section-ACC understand-PRF even AUX-PST-1PL 'In fact, it even turns out we understood this section.'
  - b. \*anla-mış bile ol-duğ-umuz bölüm understand-PRF even AUX-PP-1PL section

Intended: 'The section that we even understood.'

Adapted from Göksel (2001)

The sentences in (18), show that the auxiliary verb is a visible layer to syntax in (18a) but invisible in (18b) tested by the eligibility of adverb *bile* 'even' in both configurations. This makes accounting for the structural properties of *ol*- quite cumbersome. Since a point can not be set for its structural properties to define it properly. In one hand it takes part in the formation of a complex predicate in small clause analysis and in 'visible' auxiliary analysis, in the other hand it is just a simple carrier for morphemes that do not have their 'proper' slots available, e.g. 'invisible' analysis. Now turning back to the issue of neg raising, it is usually easy to test for it if a language has strict negative concord for its n-words. Luckily for us Turkish is taken to be a strict negative concord language in Jeretic (2018), Kelepir (1999), and Özyıldız (2017). This way the negation in (19) is raised from the embedded verb to the matrix verb.

- (19) a. *Hiç kimse-nin kitap oku-duğ-un-u düşün-m-üyor-um*. no body-GEN book read-PP-3SG-ACC think-NEG-PROG-1SG 'I dont think anybody is reading books.'
  - b. *Hiç kimse-nin kitap oku-ma-dığ-ın-ı düşün-üyor-um*. no body-GEN book read-NEG-PP-3SG-ACC think-PROG-1SG 'I think nobody is reading books.'

It is clear in (19) that the NPI *hiç kimse* 'nobody' needs a licensor, and Turkish being a strict negative concord language, there should be a local licensor. This points to the fact that

the negation in (19b) was originally in the embedded clause. If I try to do the same for our case, meaning I combine an NPI with a supposed neg raising to 'ol-' as in (20), I don't get a comparable grammatical reading.

In (20a), the negation is not raised from within the *ok-uyor* 'read-PROG' but it is affixed to the auxiliary verb treating the NPI as a main subject. Whereas in (20b) the embedded verb and the NPI subject is treated as a small clause and NPI is no longer the main subject. This is why I claim that having functional heads like Negation and Aspect after *ol*- adds a layer of interpretation for the auxiliary verb itself. In (18) the past participle is directly affixed to the auxiliary verb without further functional heads where *ol*- is only there because the morpheme slot for the nominalizer is occupied and thereby the auxiliary verb does not have syntactic visibility. Following from this I only used *ol*- as a carrier for the Nominalizer *-mAK* in my analysis. This way I avoided giving *ol*- syntactic visibility. If functional heads are used after the auxiliary verb and it gains structural visibility, the analysis still holds. One might argue that the neg raising can take place if the non control variant of *-mAK* is used as in (21) but I addressed this being already a size difference between control and non-control variants of *-mAK* and in which case the case alternation does not take place anyway. As shown early on in (3).

(21) a. *Hiç kimse-nin kitap oku-m-yor ol-ma-sın-dan utan-dı-m*.

no body-GEN book read-NEG-PROG AUX-NMLZ-3SG-ABL be\_ashamed-PST-1SG
b. *Hiç kimse-nin kitap ok-uyor ol-ma-ma-sın-dan utan-dı-m*.

no body-GEN book read-PROG AUX-NEG-NMLZ-3SG-ABL be\_ashamed-PST-1SG
'I was ashamed of nobody reading books.'

## 5 Conclusion

In this paper, I tried to account for verbs that can assign both idiosyncratic Dative and Ablative cases to their nominalized internal arguments. I provided the necessary background about how to interpret and form these case alternations, and how the selection might be regulated. I gave explicit structural analysis according to the conditions in which a case is either blocked or favored. This analysis may not have broader implementations for the interpretation of idiosyncratic cases, and it can rightfully be challenged in its predictions. However the overt examples of the relation between case and Aspect is apparent. This paper incites further consideration into how we think of them. The most adventitious thing about the instance of case alternation is how it is possible for a verb to assign two different cases when they are both idiosyncratic. For further exploration, it might be beneficial to look at other Turkic languages to first see if these case alternating verbs also behave the same in those languages, and see if they respond the same to functional configurations as in Turkish.

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