Headedness, Coordinate Ellipsis of Predicates, and Projection Labeling in Turkish Coordinations
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Abstract

This paper addresses some coordinate structure types in Turkish, a head-final language. It proposes a constraint for head-final languages such that, even in word-order free head-final languages, the predicate must be clause-final: clauses must strictly represent the head-final property of the language. This constraint (a Predicate-final constraint: PFC) is parametrized, such that it is (near?-)absolute for some head-final languages (e.g. Japanese), but limited to embedded clauses in others (e.g. Turkish). The predictions made by this constraint are borne out in Turkish: This constraint is illustrated for scrambling, for Yes/No questions, and for coordinate structures with identical predicates, showing that the ellipsis of that predicate obeys this parametrized constraint. This has immediate consequences for the directionality of such ellipsis: While both forward and backward ellipsis are possible in Turkish root clauses, only backward ellipsis is allowed in embedded clauses. Additional facts in coordinate structure with predicate ellipsis are shown to follow from this constraint, as well. Following Munn (1993) and (1996), I assume that coordinate structures are headed, and that a Boolean Phrase (BP), including one of the conjuncts, gets adjoined to another conjunct. In Turkish, both directions of adjunction are possible; however, leftward adjuction is unmarked, given that Turkish is verb-final, while rightward adjunction is marked. The entire coordination is labeled in conformity with its (phrasal) head. The proposed PFC prohibits for the predicate of the adjunction target, i.e. the phrasal head of the coordinate structure, to undergo ellipsis—i.e. the formal realization of the PFC in a coordinate structure. A number of observations follow: In backward Coordination Ellipsis (CE), word order must be parallel in the two conjuncts; predicate-subject agreement is preferably identical; where it is not, the surviving predicate may be in the plural (even where its subject is singular), and it expresses the person feature of the final conjunct. In forward CE, the surviving verb cannot be in the plural, if its own subject is in the singular; that verb can express the person feature of its own subject only; word order doesn’t have to be parallel in the two conjuncts. These differences are captured within the proposed headed structure for coordinate constructions, without the need to adjoin heads to phrases. Both forward and backward CE are possible with predicates that are not in a direct coordinate construction but rather are in clauses which are themselves constituents of a higher-level coordinate construction. I show that this is possible only if the elided predicate is string-adjacent to a higher predicate which itself undergoes CE, and which is part of a coordinate construction. I suggest that these facts belong to the PF-component of the grammar, and I further suggest tentatively that CE in both directions is a PF-phenomenon. This proposal can be accommodated nicely in an approach as the one advanced here, whereby CE in both directions is conditioned by different structures.