

Adverbial Clauses in Modern Turkish*

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Abstract: In this study, the topic of adverbial clauses within modern Turkish, the mostly spoken and processed language among Turkic language family in Altaic languages will be covered. Turkish type subordinate clauses has always been an attractive topic for western researchers and broad literature on these exists in the western world. Various evaluations of adverbial clauses are present in this literature. For example, in Altaic languages, the word order in an ordinary sentence is as subject-object-verb and subordinate clause precedes the main clause. However, during my PhD thesis, novel tendencies and constructions differing from these general observations are also determined. In this regard, word order of adverbial clauses in modern Turkish and marking of adverbial clauses as well as their position relative to superordinate clause will be discussed extensively in this study.

Key words: Altaic languages, Turkish, syntax, adverbial clauses, word order, marking of adverbial clauses' position

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Introduction

Turkish converb clauses correspond to adverbial clauses in European type languages in terms of function. However in European type languages, these are made by lexical elements, whereas in Turkish type languages converbs are made by morphological elements or complex units or syntactic means. Converbs are especially common in many non-European languages. Among these Turkic languages have attracted especial attention and converbs play a central role in their syntax. Furthermore Johanson states that all the more as Turkic languages –like Mongolian, Tungusic, Korean, Japanese, Dravidian etc. – exhibit particularly elaborate converb systems (1995: 313).

Sample of this syntactic differences between Indo-European and non-European languages:

- (1) I fell in love when I saw you

when: subordinative conjunction

- (2) Ali eve gelinece uyudu (Ali slept when he came home).

-ince: suffixed subjunctive

In English adverbial clauses are introduced by words such as when, because, although. In Turkish, adverbial clauses can be finite or non-finite. Finite forms are marked by subordinating conjunctions and they carry Persian -ki influence. These are structurally similar to Indo-European language type adverbial clause. However, in non-indo-european languages, especially in Turkish type languages non-finite adverbial clauses have a minimum predicator and a non-finite

predication which is occurred a verbal root: *geline* [predication] < *gel-* [verbal root] + *-ince* [predicator]

So far, the syntactic difference in forming adverbial clauses between Indo-European and Altaic type languages is simply pointed out. Here non-finite adverbial clauses were discussed only. The main topic of this study is to analyze the word order of adverbial clauses in modern Turkish and marking of adverbial clauses' position relative to superordinate clause. There are three types of adverbial clauses in Turkish:

- a. Ones have certain morphology: formed with converbs: *-(I)p*, *-InçA*, *-ArAk*...
- b. Participle nominalization: participles, verbal nouns are marked with case or followed by postpositions: *-DIK+I + için*, *-AcAk+I + zaman*, *-DIk+I+n+dA*; *-AcAk+I+n+dAn*
- c. Subordination of finite clauses: *diye*, *ki*, *madem ki*, *-DI mI*, *clitic -dA*...

Since this topic is very comprehensive, I will only analyze adverb clauses formed by main converbs have certain morphology such as *-(I)p*, *-ArAk*.

In sample part of this investigation, a corpus involving a great number of different fields and types of written and spoken examples in modern Turkish was used. (<http://derlem.mersin.edu.tr/ikilitekrar/>).

1. Word Order of Adverbial Clauses in Modern Turkish

It is generally considered that Turkish has SOV word order in which verb takes part at the end of sentence. American linguist Greenberg generally divides languages in three as SOV, SVO and VSO and regards Turkish a SOV language. In the studies based on Greenberg's classification, a "basic order" is mentioned and "basic order" is referred to "canonic word order".

However, Turkish -especially at spoken language- deviates from this SOV order. This deviation is explained as "pragmatic priority at discourse". Instead of constituents such as the subject or the object, pragmatix discourse constituents like topic/given (thema) and comment/new (rhema) play role in shaping the word order (Abraham 1994: 235). Accordingly, speaker can replace the elements with respect to the value of elements.

In Turkish, word order is flexible and not rigid as Turkish has an encoding in which words can move freely. However, this does not mean "you order words as you wish". In Turkish, changing in basic word order should be functional. Erguvanlı Taylan presents a table in which there are three major syntactic positions, each of that has a corresponding pragmatic function (1984: 72):

<u>Syntactic position</u>		<u>Pragmatic position</u>
S- initial	➡	topic
Immediately preverbal	➡	focus

Post-predicate  backgrounding

Topic (T)= What is the sentence about? T is an information which has already existed in the discourse.

Focus (F)= F is a new information in the sentence. This new information generally is the most important information which should be focused on.

Background (B)= Compared to T and F, B is less important information. B is as a part of the context which is the rest of utterance.

1.1. SOV Word Order Pattern in Adverbial Clauses

Johanson states that adverbial clauses often start like a finite sentence, do not exhibit a special word order pattern and will not require any preparation that might cause difficulty while speaking (1991: 103). According to this, *topic* position is located in the very beginning of the sentence in Turkish. *Topic* position conveys major issue talked about. The *topic* of sentence is generally the subject of the sentence.

- (1) *Ben sen-i düşün-üp, seni konuşmaktan başka bir şey*
 I you-ACC think-IP.CONV
yapamıyorum ciddi.

1.2 VOS Word Order Pattern in Adverbial Clauses

In such adverbial clauses, basic word order SOV changes according to pragmatic priority of discourse and sentence constituents become as V+O+S. In this word order pattern predicate is located “topic” position not at the end of the sentence:

(2) *Anahtar paspasın altında durur, aç-ı-p kapı-yı, girerler.*
 open-IP.CONV door-ACC

(3) *Teknem var diye vur-up kafa-yı yatmayacaksın, her gün balığa çıkacaksın.*
 hit-IP.CONV head-ACC

1.3. SVO Word Order Pattern in Adverbial Clauses

Since T is generally determined depending on discourse, in the adverbial clauses below T is not existent, F and B are existent. In the examples below the elements which precedes adverbial clauses' predicate are in *focus* position, because they convey the most important information. In addition, adverbial clause's objects are also “background” elements, because they precede the adverbial clause's predicate.

(4) *Ben al-ı-p baş-ım-ı gideceğim bir gün.*
 I take-IP CONV head-POSS1SG-ACC

(5) *Aynanın kırıkları gözüne kaçan insan-lar ağla-yarak kendi-leri-ni kurtarabilirler.*
 human-PL cry-ARAK.CONV self-POSS3PL-ACC

1.4. OSV Word Order Pattern in Adverbial Clauses

In this word order pattern, object is located in *topic* position while the subject is located in *focus* position. Here, constituents in *focus* position are in the foreground:

- 6) Kitab-ı, başka müşteri-ler gör-üp elimizden alacaklar,
 book -ACC other customer-PL see-IP.CONV
*kapacaklarmış gibi, acele, veznenin yanındaki paketleme masasına
 koşturuyor, acele, parasını ödüyor, kitabevinden kaçıırıyorduk adeta.*

- (7) Parmak-ları-na dola-dığ-ı saç-ları-nı ben çek-ip
 finger-POSS3PL-DAT wind-DIK.PTCP-ACC hair-POSS3PL-ACC I pull-IP.CONV
alsaydım bilirdim; o mu değil mi?

1.5. OVS Word Order Pattern in Adverbial Clauses

As for this kind of adverbial clauses, based on pragmatic priority of the discourse, the object is located in the beginning of the clause which is sequentially followed by predicate and subject. Objects that immediately precede the predicate in the examples below convey the new information and are in the position of *focus*.

- (8) Bazen öküz-ler de ağla-r di-yerek bay öküz,
 sometimes ox-PL DA.PART cry-AOR say-ArAk.Conv mr. ox
hem gözyaşı döktü yolun kıyıcığında, hem de sinirinden fısıldadı durdu.

- (9) Bu-nu öğren-ince Bedriye, Zilha'yı yolladı.

this-ACC learn-INCA.CONV Bedriye

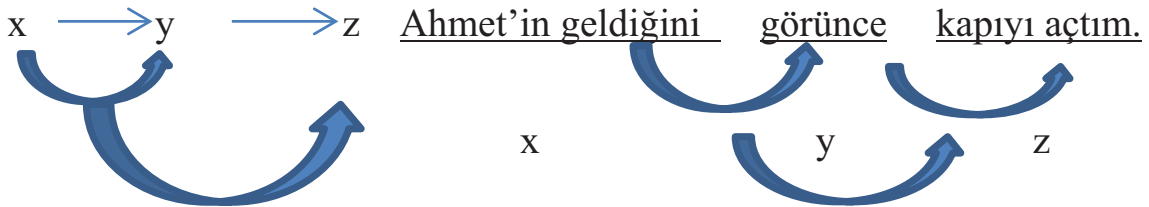
1.6. VSO Word Order Pattern in Adverbial Clauses

Contrary to the basic word order, predicate is in the *topic* position. According to the analyzed corpus, this word order pattern is the least frequently used one. As seen in example (10), this pattern is mainly used in poetry.

- (10) Gel-ince sen yan-ım-a, *değişir birden*
 come-INCA.CONV. you near-POSS1SG-DAT
ihtiyar dünya!

2. Marking of adverbial clauses' position

One of the major characteristics of Turkish is that it has a left-branching syntax, in other words it has *rectum-regens norm*. “According to this rule subordinate constituent (rectum) precede the main constituent (regens) in terms of syntactic” (Johansen 1992, 254-255). For instance, if sentence extends, new constituents are put on left side of regens.



Kornfilt also states that in an unmarked word order, all types of adverbial clauses are placed at the beginning of the main sentence.

However, due to the general flexibility of word order in Turkish, the adverbial clause can surface in any position (2000: 68). This is again related to *communication perspective*. As for analyzed corpus adverbial clauses are positioned three ways: initial position, final position, medial position adverbial clauses.

2.1. Initial position

In some languages are stated that a characteristic of adverbial subordinate clauses is their position. In Mandarin, Ethiopian Semitic, Turkish and many other languages, adverbial clauses must precede the main clause (Thompsons and Longacre 1985: 174). However this is not a norm, which, adverbial clauses can be positioned by different ways as shown below.

Considering adverbial clauses' position relative to main clause there occurs three different phenomenon with regard to word order and information structure: *topic*, *focus* and *background*. Namely, adverbial clause located in the initial position relative to main clause is a *topic* element since it presents on spoken information.

(11) Bekir sırtında gübre taşıyıp tarlayı beslerdi.

(12) Oysa yataktan gökyüzüne bakınca, havayı bulutlandı sanmışım.

2.2. Final position

Adverbial clauses take place after the main clause predicate. For this reason, adverbial clauses are *background* element. Therefore the important information is here beared by the main clause while the adverbial clause implies the least important information based on “pragmatic priority of discourse” norm. Aydemir also states that adverbial clauses founded in final position become defocused with regards to *communication perspective* (2010: 15).

(13) *Sıktık birbirimizi, sarılıp.*

(14) *Bu yazıyla ilgili bir haberi sen getirdin: Gazetenin Genel Yayın Yönetmeni Cevat Fehmi Başkut şaşırmış yazıyı alınca.*

(15) *"Hoş geldin," diyor bana bakarak.*

2.3. Medial position

Some adverbial clauses are found embedded into the main clause in the medial position. Such adverbial clauses entirely fuse with main clause. Since they precede main clause predicate, they generally convey the newest and most important information and are located as *focus* element.

(16) *Onlar burada kendi köşelerinde "dilenci hayatı sürüp" dilenci edebiyatı yapıyor.*

(17) *İçinden, o palayı alarak bu yabancı adama saldırmak geldi.*

(18) *Amma yaptın Arif Ağa, biz olalım olmayalım, canın çekince girip istediğin kadar yiyeceksin.*

Results

- In Turkish, there is no specific word order pattern in adverbial clauses either, similar to main clauses.
- According to the pragmatic priority of discourse, sentence constituents can order flexibly. Johanson explain this as “communication perspective” (Mitteilungs-perspektive) and according to this, the speaker prefers an order which is formed by Thema in the beginning of the talk and Rhema at the course of the talk (1971:230). The important point here is what the speaker would like to give and how and to what extent it is given (Aydemir 2010: 10).
- Flexibility of Turkish word order can be expressed mathematically. Different orders may occur by the number of constituents. When are looked at the example above, there are six different orders: $3! = 3 \times 2 = 6$
- The position of adverbial clauses are not fixed in Turkish. They also may appear in *initial*, *medial* or *final* position relative to main clause.
- Adverbial clauses may also be *topic*, *focus* or *background* element of the main clause.

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