

Why situation theory cannot explain the accusative case marking in Turkish

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Abstract

The accusative (ACC) is not a well-understood case in Turkish; it has been a challenge for linguists since Seaman (1670), if not earlier, who noted that the accusative marker signifies the direct object (DO) in Turkish. Because Turkish does not have any morphological determiners or a definite article, such as *the* in English (e.g., Underhill 1976; Erguvanlı 1984; Kornfilt 1997), ACC, one of the six cases in Turkish, has been characterized (generally speaking) either as corresponding to the definite article in English (e.g., Banguoğlu 2004; Crowley 1938; Ergin 1962; Erguvanlı 1984; Erguvanlı-Taylan 1987; Gencan 1970, 2001; Lewis, 2000; Mowle 1934; Nemeth 1962; Sebüktekin 1971; Swift 1963), as indicating referentiality (e.g., Dede 1986), or as indicating specificity (e.g., Swift 1963; Erguvanlı 1984; Enç 1991; Kornfilt 1997; Aygen-Tosun 1999; von Heusinger 2002; Aissen 2003). However, none of the approaches put forth so far seems to be able to fully capture the meaning and/or the function of the ACC marker. The presence or absence of ACC does not necessarily correlate with definiteness, referentiality, or specificity. DOs may have ACC but may be indefinite, non-specific, and/or non-referential (Bolgün 2005). Nakipoğlu (2009) investigates accented versus unaccented ACC marked definite objects, arguing that the former produces existential whereas the latter pragmatic presupposition respectively; however, it does not address the alternation between ACC versus no ACC on DOs (i.e., why some DOs take ACC in the first place). Kılıçaslan (2006) offers a situation-theoretic account of ACC and suggests that if the descriptive content is not part of what characterizes the situation described by the sentence, the DO bears ACC; otherwise, it does not. In this article, I argue and show through examples taken from METU Turkish corpus (Say et al. 2002) and Turkish newspapers, that the situation-theoretic account cannot explain the ACC marking.

Keywords: accusative; case marking; corpus-based; specificity; referentiality; situation theory; definiteness

1. Introduction and problem statement

In this paper, due to page limitations, I will address only Kılıçaslan's (2006) situation-theoretic account, leaving out (or touching very briefly on) other valuable contributions reported in various studies cited in the abstract. Researchers interested in this topic are encouraged to read those studies some of which are listed in the References section, which is by no means a complete list.

In linguistic literature on ACC in Turkish, there is usually a mention of four distinct DO types. These are illustrated in boldface in the following four examples (taken from Taylan and Zimmer 1994)² and will be referred to as Type I through Type IV (exemplified by (1) through (4) respectively).

- (1) Ali her gün **gazete-yi** oku-yor.
Ali every day newspaper-ACC read-PROG
'Ali reads the newspaper everyday.'

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² Boldfacing is added; the gloss of the first example is slightly modified from the original, to fit the convention that is followed in this paper, and glosses have been added to examples (2), (3), and (4).

- (2) Ali her gün bir **gazete-yi** oku-yor.
Ali every day one newspaper-ACC read-PROG
'Ali reads a newspaper everyday.'
- (3) Ali her gün bir **gazete** oku-yor.
Ali every day one newspaper read-PROG
'Ali reads a newspaper everyday.'
- (4) Ali her gün **gazete** oku-yor.
Ali every day newspaper read-PROG
'Ali reads a newspaper/newspapers everyday.'

The boldfaced nouns in the above examples share a common feature: they all occupy the unmarked DO position, immediately before the verb. What is different about these DOs is that (1) has the accusative (ACC) marker, (2) has the ACC marker and is preceded by *bir*³ 'one,' (3) is also preceded by *bir* but does not have the ACC marker, and (4) is in its so-called bare form; it neither has the ACC marker nor is it preceded by *bir*.

Given these different ways of expressing the (seemingly) same idea, the question arises as to what the difference is. The boldfaced noun in (1) is generally considered to be definite, in the sense that the hearer knows or can identify the *gazete* 'newspaper' being mentioned. In (4), with no ACC or a preceding *bir*, it is indefinite or even generic, in the sense that *gazete* refers to the category of newspapers in general. Therefore, while the presence and absence of ACC marker on the boldfaced nouns, in (1) and (4) respectively, can perhaps be explained with the concept of definiteness, it is not of much help, if any, in explaining the presence or absence of the ACC marker in (2) and (3), since the noun *gazete* in these is preceded by *bir*, which is considered by some to be the indefinite article in Turkish. These (i.e., the DOs preceded by *bir*) are explained by appealing to other notions some of which are listed in the abstract. However, none of them fully captures the meaning(s) and function(s) of ACC (See, for example, Bolgün 2005; Johanson 2006; Kornfilt & von Heusinger 2008; Özge 2011, among others).

2. Situation-theoretic account and why it cannot explain the ACC in Turkish

Kılıçaslan (2006) offers a situation-theoretic account of case-marking in Turkish. He states that, following situation theory, if the descriptive content is not part of what characterizes the situation described by the sentence, then the NP bears ACC; otherwise, it does not. Let us look at some of the examples presented in support of this account. (6) and (7), Kılıçaslan's (14) and (15), are assumed to be uttered as a reply to the question in (5)⁴, Kılıçaslan's (13).

- (5) Oda-ya gir-diğ-in-de, ne gör-dü-n?
room-DAT enter-NOM-POSS-LOC what see-PAST-2SG
'What did you see when you entered the room?'
- (6) Oda-da üç adam var-dı.
room-LOC three man exist-PAST
'There were three men in the room.'
- a. ??Adam-lar-dan bir-i bir elma-yı yi-yor-du.
man-PL-ABL one-POSS one **apple-ACC** eat-PROG-PAST

³ Taylan and Zimmer (1994) use the term 'indefinite article' to refer to *bir* 'one.' However, there is no consensus on this. For example, while Swift (1963), Lewis (1967) Tura (1973), Taylan and Zimmer (1994), Kornfilt (1997), and Lewis (2000) treat it as such in certain uses, others do not. Aygen-Tosun (1999) cites Crisma (1997) who argues that if a language has only one article, it is expected to be the definite article, and since Turkish does not have a definite article, *bir* is not likely to be an indefinite article.

⁴ Examples (5), (6), and (7) are Kılıçaslan's (13), (14), and (15) respectively.

- b. Adam-lar-dan bir-i bir **elma** yi-yor-du.
man-PL-ABL one-POSS one **apple** eat-PROG-PAST
- (7) Oda-da bir masa ve masa-nın üst-ü-nde üç karınca var-dı
room-LOC one table and table-GEN top-POSS-LOC three ant exist-PAST
'There was a table in the room and there were three ants on the table.'
- a. Karınca-lar-dan bir-i bir **elma-yı** yi-yor-du.
ant-PL-ABL one-POSS one **apple-ACC** eat-PROG-PAST
'One of the ants was eating an apple.'
- b. ??Karınca-lar-dan bir-i bir **elma** yi-yor-du
ant-PL-ABL one-POSS one **apple** eat-PROG-PAST

Kılıçaslan argues that the reason (6a) and (7b) are odd when uttered in the actual world (as opposed to an imaginary one such as in a fairy tale) has to do with whether or not the 'apple' (to which is referred through the DO) is within the physical boundaries of the described situation. If it is within the physical boundaries of the described situation, then there is no need for ACC, and if it is not, then the DO will have to take the ACC. Therefore, in (6b), the apple falls within the physical boundaries of the parts of the man's body (including the mouth, the part of face surrounding the mouth and the hands or legs) involved in the act of eating the apple, and as such, there is no need for ACC. In (7b), however, the apple is not within the physical boundaries of the parts of the ant's body (the ant is much smaller than the apple), and as such, ACC is required; without ACC, it sounds odd.

While the explanation provided may seem to account for the alternation of ACC – no ACC, there are numerous examples where this does not hold. For instance, in the first of the following two examples with similar descriptive content, the DO *üniversite* 'university' in relation to 'finishing (i.e., graduating from) a university' is expressed with ACC, while in the second, it is expressed without. Please note that in both examples, the DO *üniversite* can be used with or without ACC without resulting in any oddity.

- (8) Artık **üniversite-yi** bitir-mek ve aynı kariyer-de
anymore **university-ACC** finish-INF and same career-LOC

ilerle-mek çalışma yaşam-ı aç-ı-sı-ndan
progress-INF work life-CM angle-POSS-ABL

garantili bir yol değil.
guaranteed one way not

'Graduating from a university and progressing in the same career is not a reliable way for the work life anymore.'

- (9) Gör-ül-düğ-ü gibi, dışarı-dan
see-PASS-PTCL-POSS as out-ABL

bak-ıl-dığ-ı-nda doktor baba, sadık eş
look-PASS-PTCL-POSS-LOC doctor father faithful spouse

ve **üniversite** bitir-miş, iş hayat-ı-na
and **university** finish-MPST business life-POSS-DAT

at-ıl-mış delikanlı; toplum-un aile
throw-PASS-MPST youngster society-GEN family

imaj-ı-na ve değer-ler-i-ne ne de
image-POSS-DAT and value-PL-POSS-DAT what also

uygun bir aile.
suitable one family

‘As can be seen, when looked at from the outside, a doctor father, a faithful spouse, and a youngster who has graduated from a university, and is already in the business life; what a family, just fitting the society’s family image and values.’

In the two examples above, *üniversite* is not a unique, or a particular university. The descriptive content is similar in both. In fact, in (8) the descriptive content (with *kariyer* ‘career,’ and *çalışma yaşamı* ‘work life’) is more pronounced in relation to the situation, and as such, following Kılıçaslan’s account, it should not be possible to use ACC here. Yet, the DO is used with ACC.

In (9), the DO *üniversite* is used without ACC. However, if used with ACC, the sentence would easily pass an acceptability judgment without any oddity prescribed to it.

Consider the following counterexample:

- (10) Siz-e yap-acağ-ım iğne bak-ın bu,
you-DAT do-FUT-1SG injection look-2PL this
- di-yerek **bir ampül-ü** göster-miş, sonra da
say-ADV **one ampoule-ACC** show-MPST then also
- çek-tiğ-i ilaç-ı yargıç-ın damar-ı-na
extract-REL-POSS medicine-ACC judge-GEN vein-POSS-DAT
- ver-miş-ti.
give-MPST-PAST

‘He had shown (him) an ampoule, saying ‘look, the injection that I am going to do is this,’ and then, had injected the medicine that he extracted into the judge’s vein.’

In example (10), the descriptive content (including, the *iğne* ‘needle; injection,’ *ampül* ‘ampoule,’ *ilaç* ‘medicine,’ and *damar* ‘vein’) is clearly part of what characterizes the situation. As such, by Kılıçaslan’s account, the DO *bir ampül* ‘an ampoule’ should not bear ACC. However, in the example, it is used with ACC.

Consider yet another counterexample:

- (11) Karne-ler öğrenci-ler için hazırla-n-ıyor.
grade.report-PL student-PL for prepare-PASS-PROG
- Veli-ye ver-il-me-si hiç doğru bir yaklaşım
parent-DAT give-PASS-NML-POSS never right one approach
- değil. Okul-lar **öğrenci-yi** belgelendir-ir.
not school-PL **student-ACC** certify-AOR

‘Grade reports are being prepared for students. Giving them [the grade reports] to the parents is never a good approach. Schools document [give documents to] the student.’

In (11) as well, the descriptive content (i.e., grade report, students, parents, schools) is also part of what characterizes the situation, which, by Kılıçaslan’s account, should lead to no ACC on the DO. Yet, the DO *öğrenci* ‘student’ has ACC. Incidentally, in (11) *öğrenci* ‘student,’ is neither identifiable nor specific.

Especially challenging counterexamples to Kılıçaslan’s account (and perhaps to all other accounts put forth so far) are those in which the DO can be with or without ACC without leading to any oddities because it would be fairly difficult, if not impossible, to argue that the descriptive content simultaneously is and is not part of what characterizes the situation. For instance, in (12) below, the DO *bir şey* ‘something’ [lit. one thing] is used with ACC. However, it can perfectly be used without ACC. In fact in (13), in an almost identical clause, the DO *bir şey* is used without ACC.

- (12) Bir insan-ı yanlış yönlendir-ecek ne
 one human-ACC wrong guide-FUT neither
- güc-üm ne de sihr-im var. Bir insan
 strength-POSS/1SG nor also magic-POSS/1SG exist one human
- bir şey-i** bil-iyor-sa, bil-diği-nden asla
one thing-ACC know-PROG-COND know-REL-ABL never
- vazgeç-mez.
 concede-NEG

‘I have neither the strength nor the magic power to misguide a human being. If a human being knows something, he never concedes what he knows.’

- (13) Birisi **bir şey** bil-iyor-sa, ben-im yap-tığ-ı-m
 someone **one thing** know-PROG-COND I-GEN do-NOM-POSS-1SG
- gibi belge-si-ni orta-ya koy-acak.
 as document-POSS-ACC middle-DAT put-FUT

‘If someone knows something, he shall put forth its document, just like I have done.’

Note that in (13), the DO *bir şey* can perfectly be used with ACC, just as in (12) it can perfectly be used without.

3. Discussion

I propose (following Taylan & Zimmer 1994)⁵ that the function of ACC is to individuate the entity denoted by the NP to which it is attached, and I also propose that it is the interplay of context, word order, point of view, and meaning of the verb, that leads to the determination as to whether or not the DO will take ACC. All other concepts (such as definiteness, specificity, and referentiality, etc.) come about as a result of the individuating function of ACC because individuation helps the referent of the DO noun to be seen, or thought of as an entity separate from all others around it. However, note that not all ACC-bearing DO nouns are definite or specific. For example, in (8), above, the ACC-bearing DO is not definite and in (12) it is not specific. On the other hand, DO can be specific even without ACC, as in *bir bebek* in (14), which refers to a specific baby; namely, Necla’s baby.

- (14) Korku-dan yaşa-dık-lar-ı-nı kimse-ye
 fear-ABL live-REL-PL-POSS-ACC nobody-DAT
- anlat-a-ma-yan ve defa-lar-ca tecavüz-e
 tell-ABIL-NEG-REL and count-PL-ADV rape-DAT
- uğra-yan Necla, hamileliđ-i-nin 7.
 be.exposed-REL Necla pregnancy-POSS-GEN 7th
- ay-ı-nda ölü **bir bebek-Ø** dünya-ya getir-ince
 month-POSS-ABL dead one baby world-DAT bring-WHEN
- ‘sır-ı orta-ya’ çık-tı.
 secret-POSS out-DAT exit-PAST

⁵ Taylan and Zimmer do not commit themselves to any particular definition of the term. In their seminal study of transitivity, Hopper and Thompson take individuation to refer “both to the distinctness of the patient from the A[gent] and to its distinctness from its own background” (1980: 253). The term individuation is used in a similar fashion in this paper, although as Hopper and Thompson acknowledge, individuation is more complex than it is often thought to be.

‘When Necla, who could not tell anyone about the things that she lived through and who was raped repeatedly, gave birth to a dead baby in the 7th month of her pregnancy, ‘her secret came out.’

Therefore, instead of analyzing ACC dichotomously, it should be perceived as being scalar, as proposed below.

Table 1 Individuation scale of DOs

				EXAMPLE
↑ Increasing ↓ Decreasing	Type I			
	Singular	<i>N-ACC</i>		<i>kalemi</i>
	Plural	<i>Npl-ACC</i>		<i>kalemleri</i>
	Type II			
Singular	bir <i>N-ACC</i>		bir <i>kalemi</i>	
Plural	bir <i>Npl-ACC</i>		bir <i>kalemleri</i>	
Type III				
Singular	bir <i>N</i>		bir <i>kalem</i>	
Plural	bir <i>Npl</i>		bir <i>kalemler</i>	
Type IV				
Plural	<i>Npl</i>		<i>kalemler</i>	
Singular	<i>N</i>		<i>kalem</i>	

Exploring ACC this way, one can more easily see how a proper name, which should have the highest level of individuation with ACC suffix (because a proper name refers to an entity that is quite distinct from everything around it), can be used in the lowest possible level of individuation (type IV – singular), as shown in the example below.

- (15) Yılmaz, “Kurtlar Vadisi”nde Necati Şaşmaz’ın Sharon
 Yılmaz Kurtlar Vadisi-LOC Necati Şaşmaz-GEN Sharon
 Stone’u öp-üş-me-si sahne-si-ne de
 Stone-ACC kiss-REC-NML-POSS scene-CM-DAT also
 ilginç bir yorum getir-di.
 interesting one interpretation bring-PAST
 Yılmaz “**Sharon Stone** öp-mek için 10 bin dolar
 Yılmaz Sharon Stone kiss-INF for 10 thousand dollar
 al-ır-dı-m.[...]” de-di
 take-AOR-PAST-1SG say-PAST

‘Yılmaz also commented on the scene in which Necati Şaşmaz kisses Sharon Stone. Yılmaz said, “I would request 10 thousand dollars to kiss Sharon Stone [...]”

In (15), a Turkish comedian and actor, Cem Yılmaz, comments on a scene in which another actor kisses Sharon Stone in one of the episodes of a popular Turkish TV series. Unlike many people in the media who consider this to be amazing and hard to achieve (in fact, it is rumored that the producers have paid Sharon Stone a significant amount of money for a brief appearance), Cem Yılmaz thinks differently and says that he would have requested ten thousand dollars to kiss Sharon Stone or actors like her since, he argues, he is a strong

individual and also younger than she is. To express this generality (i.e., to include others and not just Sharon Stone), he does not use ACC with the name ‘Sharon Stone.’ The lack of ACC causes the name to be perceived as being generic and therefore less individuated. The intended and accomplished meaning is ‘both Sharon Stone and actors (or individuals) like her,’ instead of only Sharon Stone as an individual.

Regarding the verb meaning, it is shown (see Table 2) that some verbs, for example, always require ACC bearing DOs (Bolgün 2005).

Table 2 Verbs and the Percentages of ACC-bearing DOs They Take

Verb	Total number of DOs found /analyzed	Number of DOs w/ ACC	% of ACC
<i>andır-</i> ‘resemble’	77	77	100%
<i>vurgula-</i> ‘emphasize’	37	37	100%
<i>göze al-</i> ‘risk; venture’	36	36	100%
<i>ele al-</i> ‘consider’	30	30	100%
<i>ziyaret et-</i> ‘visit’	17	17	100%
<i>suçla-</i> ‘blame’	16	16	100%
<i>tanıt-</i> ‘publicize; introduce’	16	16	100%
<i>yönlendir-</i> ‘guide; direct’	16	16	100%
<i>kastet-</i> ‘mean’	15	15	100%
<i>selamla-</i> ‘greet’	9	9	100%
<i>mümkün kıl-</i> ‘make (sth) possible’	8	8	100%
<i>azarla-</i> ‘scold’	7	7	100%
<i>yala-</i> ‘lick’	7	7	100%
<i>yalanla-</i> ‘deny’	5	5	100%
<i>uyut-</i> ‘(cause sth to) sleep’	3	3	100%
<i>yerle bir et-</i> ‘destroy; level’	3	3	100%
<i>görüş-</i> ‘discuss; consider’	1	1	100%
<i>öngör-</i> ‘foresee’	1	1	100%
<i>paylaş-</i> ‘share’	81	80	98.76%
<i>çöz-</i> ‘solve; untie; undo’	78	75	96.15%
<i>azalt-</i> ‘reduce’	30	28	93.33%
<i>izle-</i> ‘follow; watch’	220	205	93.18%
<i>kaydet-</i> ‘record; state’	12	11	91.66%
<i>planla-</i> ‘plan’	11	10	90.90%
<i>anımsat-</i> ‘remind’	29	26	89.65%
<i>duyumsa-</i> ‘feel; sense’	9	8	88.88%
<i>kes-</i> ‘cut’	56	48	85.71%
<i>kaçır-</i> ‘miss; kidnap’	45	38	84.44%
<i>seyret-</i> ‘watch’	146	123	84.24%
<i>öğren-</i> ‘learn’	182	152	83.51%
<i>yakala-</i> ‘catch’	30	25	83.33%
<i>seç-</i> ‘choose; select; elect’	140	116	82.85%

<i>bil-</i> ‘know’	86	71	82.55%
<i>boşalt-</i> ‘empty’	18	14	77.77%
<i>tüket-</i> ‘consume’	18	14	77.77%
<i>yut-</i> ‘swallow’	31	23	74.19%
<i>sık-</i> ‘squeeze’	58	43	74.13%
<i>söyle-</i> ‘tell; say’	261	191	73.18%
<i>vur-</i> ‘hit’	68	46	67.64%
<i>sor-</i> ‘ask’	82	52	63.41%
<i>barındır-</i> ‘harbor’	22	13	59.09%
<i>duy-</i> ‘hear’	200	114	57%
<i>öde-</i> ‘pay’	42	22	52.38%
<i>tut-</i> ‘hold’	117	60	51.28%
<i>yaz-</i> ‘write’	82	36	43.90%
<i>tak-</i> ‘affix; plug’	23	23	43.39%
<i>patlat-</i> ‘(cause sth to) explode’	20	8	40%
<i>ye-</i> ‘eat’	46	15	32.60%
<i>kazan-</i> ‘win; earn’	180	42	23.33%
<i>yap-</i> ‘make; do’	204	41	19.71%
<i>yetiştir-</i> ‘produce; raise’	42	8	19.04%
<i>üret-</i> ‘produce; generate’	69	12	17.39%
<i>ver-</i> ‘give’	328	57	17.37%
<i>kazandır-</i> ‘cause to win / earn’	30	3	10%

As can clearly be seen in the table above, some verbs (such as *andır-* ‘resemble; remind of’; *vurgula-* ‘to emphasize’) clearly favor ACC-bearing DOs. The meaning of these verbs leads to the requirement that the DO take ACC. The reasons behind such requirement (i.e., why some verbs favor or require ACC-bearing DOs) call for further analysis. However, my initial observations suggest that this is in line with the individuation analysis. For example, with the verb, *andır-*, which means ‘to resemble; to remind of,’ the referent indicated by the DO would have to be individuated (have clear boundaries and seen as a complete, separate entity, some sort of a prototype) to be reminded of.

4. Conclusions

One conclusion that can be made, other than that the situation-theoretic account as presented by Kılıçaslan (2006) cannot explain the use of ACC in Turkish, is that while syntax and semantics play a significant role in explaining the use of the ACC marker on nouns in DO position, they cannot fully do so without incorporating pragmatics into the explanation since in some cases, the same noun in DO position may or may not take the ACC marker within the same or a similar context.

It is interesting to note that when the verbs which have a high ACC-occurrence rate do not take ACC-marked DO, the reason seems to be because they are used with a ‘sense’ different from the one that takes ACC. For example, *izle-* ‘to follow’ can also mean ‘to watch.’ When, for instance, one is following a person or a thing (i.e., an individuated entity or entities) indicated by the DO, the DO takes ACC. However, when used with TV, for instance, as in *televizyon izle-* ‘lit. follow television,’ the person is not actually “following” the television (or the television set); he or she is “watching” it. What is being watched, in that sense, is different from an individu-

ated person or an object, and does not have clear boundaries. In this case, *televizyon* ‘television’ does not take ACC.

Further research is needed to examine verbs (including the ones listed in Table 2) in larger corpora to determine whether or not they follow a certain pattern and favor ACC-bearing DOs. Further research is also needed to analyze verbs that sometimes require ACC and sometimes do not. An analysis of the verbs by their meanings may enable us to make better generalizations regarding the function of ACC. The verbs were not distinguished according to the different meanings or senses they might have. For example, *kazan-* means ‘to win’ as in ‘to win a competition’ but it might also mean ‘to earn’ as in ‘to earn money.’ If the instances of this verb were to be analyzed based on its different senses that it has, the percentages regarding ACC in Table 2 might be different.

Point of view also plays a role in determining whether or not DO will take ACC, especially in situations where a DO with or without ACC is perfectly acceptable.⁶ For instance, the following shows ACC emphasizing experiencer’s viewpoint (as well as highlighting the entity referred to by the DO noun). The first boldfaced DO *şey* ‘thing’ has ACC, and it reflects the experiencer (Cansın)’s viewpoint.

- (16) Cansın, 27 Haziran akşam-ı daha önce hiç
Cansın 27 June evening-POSS more before never
- yap-ma-dığı bir şey-i yap-tı. İsveç’ten gel-en
do-NEG-REL one thing-ACC do-PAST Sweden-ABL come-REL
- arkadaş-ı Umut Kanyılmaz’la site-de küçük bir
friend-POSS Umut Kanyılmaz-COM site-LOC small one
- tur at-mak için izin iste-me-den
tour throw-INF for permission request-NEG-ABL
- baba-sı-nın otomobil-i-nin anahtar-lar-ı-nı
father-POSS-GEN car-POSS-GEN key-PL-POSS-ACC
- al-ıp direksiyon-a otur-du.
take-PTCL steering.wheel-DAT sit-PAST
- Direksiyon-a geç-ince plan-lar deęiş-ti,
steering.wheel-DAT pass-ADV plan-PL change-PAST
- site-de at-ıl-acak küçük tur birden büyü-dü,
site-LOC throw-PASS-FUT small tour suddenly grow-PAST
- Londra Asfalt-ı’na taş-tı...
Londra Road-POSS-DAT overflow-PAST

‘On June 27th, Cansın did something that he had not done before. He took the keys to his father’s car without permission and sat at the steering wheel to take a tour around the neighborhood with his friend Umut Kanyılmaz, who came from Sweden. When he sat at the steering wheel, the plans changed; the small tour that was to be taken around the neighborhood suddenly grew big and spilled over to the Londra Road...’

Example (16) is from a news item about a young boy named Cansın who dies as a result of something that he did for the first time. That ‘something’ is introduced into the discourse using *bir* + *NP-ACC* structure. The ACC in the above is optional, but its use, I believe, is intended to make us look at the events through the experiencer’s viewpoint.

⁶ See Epstein (1994, 1998, 2001, and 2002) who argues that articles (in languages such as English and French) are essentially ‘multi-functional,’ and that other than their referential function, they also have an expressive function.

Data Sources

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