"This My Dog" in Turkish
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Introduction

One of the strongest arguments for the DP-hypothesis in Abney (1987) is that determiners cannot appear together in nominals as they would compete for the same syntactic slot:

1. *this the dog
2. *this my/our chair
3. *the they
4. *the Deniz’s video game

The challenge for the NP-hypothesis here is that it is not obvious why such combinations should be banned.

Let’s consider nominals with a demonstrative, a pronoun with genitive marking and a common noun in English:

5. *I ate this my dog.
6. *I ate this our dog.
7. *Eat this our dog.
8. *Eat my dog.

None of these are grammatical in English. However, it would be worth considering the grammaticality of such combinations in other languages, as it would present a significant challenge to the DP-hypothesis. In Turkish, it turns out that such combinations are completely acceptable.

The Data

Declarative sentences containing this kind of nominal aren’t outright ungrammatical in Turkish, though they are a bit awkward:

(9) Su ben-im kope-˘ gi ye!
This I.gen dog.ACC eat
'eat this dog!' (24) DP

(12) Su ben-im kope-˘ gi ye!
This I.gen dog.ACC eat
'eat my dog!'

(13) Su biz-im kope-˘ gi ye!
This we.gen dog.ACC eat
'eat our dog!'

(14) Su Tayyip-in kope-˘ gini ye!
This Tayyip.gen dog.ACC eat
'eat Tayyip’s dog!'

But this should not be allowed even in Turkish since the genitive D head and the demonstrative are competing for the same syntactic slot.

Further, the possessive noun may also precede the demonstrative; in fact, this feels even more intuitive:

(15) Ben-im su kope-˘ gi ye!
L.gen this dog.ACC eat
'eat my dog!'

(16) Biz-im su kope-˘ gi ye!
We-gen this dog.ACC eat
'eat our dog!'

(17) Tayyip-in su kope-˘ gini ye!
Tayyip.gen this dog.ACC eat
'eat Tayyip’s dog!'

Finally, it is important to note that in Turkish, su c-selects NPs just like the English this:

(18) Ben-im kope-˘ gi ye!
L.gen dog.ACC eat
'eat my dog!'

(19) Su kope-˘ gi ye!
This dog.ACC eat
'eat this dog!'

(20) Su kedi-yi Deniz sev-iyor
This cat.ACC Deniz love.PRES
'Deniz loves this cat.'

The Problem

Can the DP-hypothesis account for the grammaticality of this structure in Turkish? Such nominal phrases seem to have the same structure in both English and Turkish:

Kuroda (1988) argues that Japanese heads allow more than one specifier because it allows the "multiple subject construction," as seen in the sentence below:

(25) Taro-ga musume-ga isya-ni natta.
Taro.NOM daughter.NOM doctor.DAT become.
'Taro, his daughter became a doctor.'

However, Turkish fails the multiple subject test (Kornfilt, pers. comm):

(26) *medeni ülke-ler erkek-ler ortalama hayat süre-si kısa
civilized country.PL-NOM man.PL-
average life span.NOM short

Alternatively, Bošković & Sener (2014) argues that the demonstrative and the possessor may be adjuncts in Turkish, though they use it for an NP-hypothesis analysis of this phenomenon instead.

A Multiple Specifier Solution?

Alexiadou et al. (2007) presupposes a view of demonstratives in which they may occupy Spec,DP position. Evidence from Greek is used to show that demonstratives may start in a lower position and raise to Spec,DP:

(22) to vivlio afio this the book
(23) afio to vivlio Greek this the book

What would the tree look like in Turkish if we assumed that su occupied Spec,DP position?

Conclusion

These facts may help convince one to abandon the DP-hypothesis at least for Turkish, which is known to not have definite articles. Alternately, one could posit an AgrP projection above DP in Turkish, so that we do not run into a multiple specifier problem (Kornfilt, pers. comm.). A more modern version should posit a little nP projection instead, defending the NP-hypothesis.

References