

# Caseless direct objects in Turkish revisited\*

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## 1 Background

It has been claimed and widely assumed that caseless direct objects in Turkish exhibit a sort of syntactic incorporation, and only their cased counterparts are true syntactic arguments (Kornfilt 1997; Knecht 1986; Nilsson 1986; Öztürk 2005 among others). Cased and caseless objects are thus widely taken as derivationally related, crystallized in Kelepir's (2001) proposal that objects pick up overt accusative as they move out of the VP. In this paper, I would like to revisit both the empirical evidence and the interpretation leading to these claims and propose revisions.

I first show that not all caseless objects are the same. Mostly drawing on Aydemir (2004), I argue that bare caseless objects and those with indefinite expressions have differences that would be very unusual if they were both incorporated. However, adopting Öztürk (2005) and against Aydemir (2004), neither of the cases can be analyzed as head incorporation.

I then turn to the cased vs. caseless distinction and argue that cased and caseless objects are not that different after all. Based on data with strictly controlled information structure, I arrive at a different generalization than most of the earlier reports and claim that caseless objects are morphosyntactically as moveable as their cased counterparts.

Hence, I propose to replace the notion of incorporation in the literature of Turkish syntax with the notion of weak case (de Hoop 1992) and conclude by a discussion of the domain of syntactic analysis in this primarily semantic phenomenon.

## 2 What we know

I will start by laying out the best understood aspects of the distribution of overt accusative case and finer distinctions between caseless objects.

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## 2.1 Cased vs. caseless objects

In Turkish, both bare and phrasal internal arguments can appear caseless. This property is only observed with arguments that surface with accusative and nominative otherwise.<sup>1</sup> I focus on the accusative objects in this paper. (1) illustrates examples with bare (1a) and phrasal (1b) caseless objects.

- (1) a. Ali kitap arı-yor.  
Ali book search-IMPERF  
'Ali is book-searching.'
- b. Ali {bir/iki/birkaç/kütüphane-ye götür-ül-ecek} kitap arı-yor.  
Ali one/two/few/library-DAT take-PASS-REL book search-IMPERF  
'Ali is searching for a/two/a few book(s) (to be taken to the library).'

When these arguments appear with an overt accusative, they induce a "specific" or "presuppositional" reading (Enç 1991; Diesing 1992 respectively). As a result, a bare noun as in (1a) turns into a definite description (2a). In contrast, NPs with a numeral or indefinite expression yield a kind of partitive reading which Enç (1991) calls a specific indefinite.

- (2) a. Ali kitab-ı arı-yor.  
Ali book-ACC search-IMPERF  
'Ali is searching for the book.'
- b. Ali {bir/iki/birkaç/kütüphane-ye götür-ül-ecek} kitab-ı arı-yor.  
Ali one/two/few/library-DAT take-PASS-REL book-ACC  
arı-yor.  
search-IMPERF  
'Ali is searching for the one/two/few book[s] (to be taken to the library).'

Some noun phrases have to surface with overt accusative case (Enç 1991). These are noun phrases such as those with possessors, demonstratives, definite pronouns, and those with expressions like 'most'.<sup>2</sup>

- (3) Ali {o kitab-\*(1)/ benim kitab-ım-\*(1)/ on-\*(u)} arı-yor.  
Ali that book-ACC my book-ACC it-ACC search-IMPERF  
'Ali is searching for that book/my book/it.'

<sup>1</sup> Caselessness of subjects is observable in word order preferences and relativization patterns (Kennelly 1997; Öztürk 2009), but both cased and caseless external arguments appear with  $\emptyset$  morphology. My claims are largely applicable to subjects as well.

<sup>2</sup> All of these are indicators of strong NPs in the sense of Milsark (1974), which leads Enç to the conclusion that specificity in her sense is behind Milsark effects.

A robust finding regarding the syntax of caseless objects is that they are lower in the structure than cased objects (Diesing 1992; Kelepir 2001). Evidence to this claim is the fact that caseless objects follow, while cased object precede, dative arguments and very low adjectival adverbs in broad focus.<sup>3</sup>

- (4) a. Ali çocuğ-a kitap ver-iyor.  
Ali child-DAT book give-IMPERF  
'Ali is book-giving to the child.'
- b. Ali kitab-1 çocuğ-a ver-iyor.  
Ali book-ACC child-DAT give-IMPERF  
'Ali is giving the book to the child.'
- (5) a. Ali yavaş kitap arı-yor.  
Ali slow book search-IMPERF  
'Ali's book-searching is slow.'
- b. Ali kitab-1 yavaş arı-yor.  
Ali book-ACC slow search-IMPERF  
'Ali's searching for the book is slow.'

Since cased and caseless direct objects never appear alongside each other in a given sentence, pairs like (4a)/(4b) and (5a)/(5b) are interpreted as derivationally related. Subsequently, cased direct objects are analyzed as having originated in the position of caseless objects and moved to a position higher than the dative object or the adjectival adverb (Kelepir 2001 among others).

## **2.2 Bare vs. indefinite caseless objects**

Caseless objects come in at least two flavors. One is with a bare singular noun as in (1a). I will refer to this type as bare caseless object in the sense that it does not have a quantificational morpheme in its phrase. The interpretation of such bare caseless objects is like those of bare plurals or compound verbs in English. These nominals are number-neutral and cannot typically introduce new discourse referents (Aydemir 2004).

- (6) a. Ali bütün gün kitap oku-du.  
Ali all day book read-PAST  
'Ali read books all day.'  
'Ali did book-reading all day.'

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<sup>3</sup> See Section 4 for some of the corresponding non-broad focus examples.

- b. \* Dün film<sub>i</sub> seyrettim. On-u<sub>i</sub>/onlar-ı<sub>i</sub> sen de seyretmelisin.  
 yesterday film watched.I. it/them you too must.watch.you  
 ‘I watched movies/did movie watching yesterday. You must watch  
 it/them, too.’ (from Aydemir 2004)

The second type of caseless object is those objects with a numeral or indefinite expression in the same noun phrase (most cases of 1b). I will refer to these as indefinite caseless objects. These are non-number neutral and are the canonical means to introduce new discourse referents. The typical expression of an English indefinite noun phrase is in this form in Turkish, not a bare caseless object or a cased object with an indefinite expression.

- (7) a. Ali bugün bir makale oku-du.  
 Ali today one article read-PAST  
 ‘Ali read an article today.’  
 b. Dün bir film<sub>i</sub> seyrettim. On-u<sub>i</sub> sen de seyretmelisin.  
 yesterday one film watched.I. it you too must.watch.you  
 ‘I watched a movie yesterday. You must watch it, too.’  
 (from Aydemir 2004)

Both bare and indefinite nominals of these broad sorts can vary with their cased counterparts exemplified in (2). What is maybe a third category is nominals that can never appear cased. This is observed with complements of light verb constructions and some measure verbs.

- (8) a. Ali pes-(\*i) et-ti.  
 Ali [PASS]-(ACC) light.do-PAST  
 ‘Ali admitted defeat.’  
 b. Kazak-lar on lira-(\*y<sub>1</sub>) tut-tu/et-ti.  
 Sweater-PL ten lira-(ACC) hold-PAST/DO-PAST  
 ‘The sweaters cost ten liras.’

An important insight of the recent literature is that none of the three types of caseless objects has to occur under strict adjacency with the verb (Öztürk 2005). Among other indicators, one that is well-known and uncontroversial is the possibility of intervening morphosyntactic elements. Here I exemplify each case with the intervening scalar additive *bile* ‘even’.

- (9) a. Ali kitap bile oku-du.  
 Ali book even read-PAST  
 ‘Ali even did book-reading.’  
 b. Ali bir makale bile oku-du.  
 Ali one article even read-past  
 ‘Ali even read an article.’

- (10) a. Ali pes bile et-ti.  
Ali [PASS] even light.do-PAST  
'Ali even admitted defeat.'
- b. Kazak-lar on lira bile tut-ma-dı.  
sweater-PL ten lira even hold-NEG-PAST  
'The sweaters didn't even cost ten liras.'

This and other evidence show that caseless nominals cannot be the products of lexical compounding but are rather built in syntax. The question is, what kind of syntax? Is it the same for all kinds of caseless nominals? Is it the same with some additional movement for cased nominals?

### **3 Bare and indefinite caseless objects: are they all the same?**

The leading view in Turkish syntax is that the absence of case on both bare nominals and nominal phrases with an indefinite expression is an indicator of incorporation. Such analyses partly stem from considerations of the Case Filter, that these caseless nominals should not be possible unless under a strict government configuration (Kornfilt 1984). Coupled with certain other morphosyntactic tendencies displayed by these nominals, this has led to proposals of incorporation in Turkish. These range from lexical compounding (Mithun 1984) to head incorporation (Knecht 1986 among others) and pseudo-incorporation (Öztürk 2005). Öztürk makes the additional strong claim that similar configurations such as light verb constructions also show pseudo-incorporation.

In this section, I review the related claims and conclude that bare caseless arguments are pseudo-incorporated and indefinites are not.

#### **3.1 Further differences between bare and indefinite caseless objects**

Semantically, bare and indefinite caseless objects display a set of differences in which bare objects show more incorporation-like characteristics as number neutrality and referential opacity (6) (see van Geenhoven 1998; Farkas & de Swart 2003 on characteristics of incorporation). In contrast, indefinite caseless objects correspond exactly to expressions with an indefinite in English: they are specified in terms of number and can introduce new discourse referents (7).

Bare caseless objects in fact seem to be restricted to the narrowest scope possible in all contexts. In contrast, indefinites can be shown to be ambiguous. In (11) we observe this ambiguity of the indefinite with respect to a universal quantifier (a) and an intensional predicate (b).<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> This property of caseless indefinites may suggest QR in this otherwise scope-rigid language, but as Özge (2011) illustrates, intermediate scope is missing, thus QR is unlikely.

- (11) a. Herkes içeride bir film izli-yor.  
 everyone inside one movie watch-PROG  
 i. ‘Everyone is watching a movie inside.’  $\forall > \exists$   
 ii. ‘There exists a movie s.t. everyone is watching it inside.’  $\exists > \forall$
- b. Bir kitap arı-yor-um. Bul-amı-yor-um. (Dede 1986)  
 one book look.for-PROG-1SG find-INABIL-PROG-1SG  
 i. ‘I am looking for a book. I can’t find one.’ *lookfor*  $> \exists$   
 ii. ‘I am looking for a book. I can’t find it.’  $\exists > \textit{lookfor}$

The bare caseless object cannot yield wide scope readings of the existential in either case.

- (12) a. Herkes içeride film izli-yor.  
 everyone inside movie watch-PROG  
 i. ‘Everyone is movie-watching inside.’  $\forall > \exists$   
 ii. Not: ‘There exists a movie s.t. everyone is watching it inside.’  
 $*\exists > \forall$
- b. Kitap arı-yor-um. Bul-amı-yor-um.  
 book look.for-PROG-1SG find-INABIL-PROG-1SG  
 i. ‘I am looking for a book. I can’t find one.’ *lookfor*  $> \exists$   
 ii. Not: ‘I am looking for a book. I can’t find it.’  $*\exists > \textit{lookfor}$

Aydemir (2004) lists two more syntacto-semantic differences between the two caseless objects.<sup>5</sup> First, bare noun objects support an atelic interpretation, whereas indefinites support a telic interpretation.

- (13) a. Ali bir saat boyunca/ \*bir saat-te çay iç-ti.  
 Ali one hour along one hour-LOC tea drank  
 ‘Ali drank tea for an hour/\*in an hour.’
- b. Ali \*bir saat boyunca/ bir saat-te bir (bardak) çay iç-ti.  
 Ali one hour along one hour-LOC one glass tea drank  
 ‘Ali drank a (glass of) tea in an hour/\*for an hour.’

Second, only bare noun objects are allowed to cooccur with an adjectival adverb. Indefinites, on the other hand, force an interpretation in which the modifier is an adjective modifying the nominal.

- (14) a. Oya bugün iyi müze gez-di.  
 Oya today good museum tour-PAST  
 ‘Oya toured museums well today.’

<sup>5</sup> She provides in fact four more arguments, but the other two are in my opinion subcases of number-neutrality and reference:  $\emptyset$  pronouns also cannot refer to bare caseless objects (which she calls ellipsis) and plurals are also number-non-neutral.

- b. Oya bugün iyi bir müze gez-di.  
 Oya today good one museum tour-PAST  
 ‘Oya toured a good museum today.’

Aydemir proposes to capture these differences with an incorporation analysis. Bare noun objects are incorporated into the verb, forming a syntactic compound. Indefinite noun phrases, on the other hand, are true syntactic arguments and can therefore act as arguments as well as referable semantic objects.

- (15) a. Bare caseless object:                      b. Indefinite caseless object:



This explains, according to Aydemir, why the bare noun object is invisible to discourse as a referent (6) or cannot act as an internal argument to “measure out the event” (13a) (in the sense of Tenny 1992). It is also the reason why bare noun verb combinations can be modified by adjectival adverbs (14a), because the adverb in this case is directly preverbal. Indefinites, on the other hand, can be discourse anaphora because they denote individuals, and measure out events because they are true internal arguments. In structures with an indefinite and an ambiguous adjectival adverb, the adverb is not preverbal and can only be interpreted as part of the NP.

### 3.2 Against head incorporation

The differences between bare and indefinite objects notwithstanding, Öztürk (2005) argues that head incorporation in the sense of Baker (1988) does not exist at all in Turkish. This is the process Aydemir (2004) assumes for (15a).

The first observation is that the bare nominal is in fact potentially phrasal. That a bare caseless object may be modified by a participle was shown in (1b) and is repeated below. This cannot be head incorporation, because head incorporation is a combination of  $X^0$  categories.

- (16) Ali kütüphane-ye götür-ül-ecek kitap arı-yor.  
 Ali library-DAT take-PASS-REL book search-PROG  
 ‘Ali is searching for (a) book(s) to be taken to the library.’

Second, unlike what has been claimed before, caseless objects can appear away from their verb. This was illustrated by the focus particle in the paradigm in (9).

In addition, when the caseless complement is given in the discourse, it can occur in a left-peripheral topic position (17). Even though there is some disagreement about the acceptability of such sentences, I concur with Öztürk for reasons I make explicit in the next section. For now, let me note that sentences such as (17) have rarely been reported to be completely ungrammatical, and strangely reported to be more acceptable than caseless indefinites in this position, which must in principle be less incorporated.

- (17) Çay<sub>i</sub> ben t<sub>i</sub> iç-me-di-m. (Öztürk 2009)  
 tea I drink-NEG-PAST-1SG  
 ‘Tea, I did not have any.’

Third, incorporation does not change the valency of the predicate. We infer this from the causative construction. Normally, the causee is marked differently depending on whether the caused event is transitive or not: it is marked accusative when the verb is intransitive (both unergative or unaccusative), and dative when the verb is transitive (19).

- (18) a. Ali Hasan-1/\*a ağla-t-tı.  
 Ali Hasan-ACC/\*DAT cry-CAUS-PAST  
 ‘Ali made Hasan cry.’  
 b. Ali su-yu/\*ya kayna-t-tı.  
 Ali water-ACC/\*DAT boil-CAUS-PAST  
 ‘Ali boiled the water.’
- (19) Ali Hasan-a/\*<sub>1</sub> balıĝ-ı tut-tur-du. (Öztürk 2005)  
 Ali Hasan-DAT/\*ACC fish-ACC catch-CAUS-PAST  
 ‘Ali made Hasan catch the fish.’

If we use a bare caseless object such as *balık* ‘fish’ instead of the cased object in (19), we still observe dative on the causee. This means that a new, intransitive verb corresponding to ‘fish-catching’ is not created via incorporation. The caseless object is visible to syntax in terms of valency.

- (20) Ali Hasan-a/\*<sub>1</sub> balık tut-tur-du. (Öztürk 2005)  
 Ali Hasan-DAT/\*ACC fish catch-CAUS-PAST  
 ‘Ali made Hasan catch fish.’

The fourth and last argument Öztürk uses to argue against head-incorporation of objects is that external arguments are also found in a similar configuration, where we do not find the head-complement relationship necessary for head incorporation. I skip this data for reasons of space but note that there is good evidence from relativization that indicates that indeed such low subjects are relativized like internal arguments despite being logical subjects (Kennelly 1997).

### **3.3 A reformulation**

In the resulting state of the literature, facts such as referential opacity, number neutrality, aspectual interpretation and adjectival adverb distribution point toward a more “incorporated” syntax/semantics for bare caseless objects, but not for indefinite caseless objects. On the other hand, major morphosyntactic tests indicate that even the more incorporated kind of caseless object is potentially phrasal, can stand away from the verb, can be an external argument, and does not change valency. Therefore, the most intuitive syntactic distinction one can draw to account for these differences like Aydemir did, namely head incorporation in the case of bare objects, does not seem to be available.

Öztürk (2005) proposes instead to account for the patterns of incorporation observed in Turkish as pseudo-incorporation, after Massam (2001). However, she claims that indefinite caseless objects also pseudo-incorporate, so that caselessness is a result of pseudo-incorporation, thus dismissing Aydemir’s (2004) observations. My solution of reconciliation building on both sets of brilliant observations is quite simple. Bare caseless objects pseudo-incorporate in Turkish and indefinites do not.

(21) *Pseudo-incorporation in Turkish:*

Caseless direct objects without a numeral/indefinite expression are pseudo-incorporated.

In making this argument, I am aware that pseudo-incorporation is a rather loose syntactic notion in that it is not so obvious what the difference is between simple merge and incorporation. In the next section, I will argue that pseudo-incorporated objects can move around, which further blurs the distinction. However, it still is a valid formal label to account for a distinction that clearly cannot be ignored. It can be asked later what exactly happens in syntax or at the interfaces for certain configurations to count as pseudo-incorporated rather than just merged.

I am also aware that that by saying that only bare objects pseudo-incorporate and indefinites do not, we lose the generalization of caselessness. Namely, we would either have to say that the absence of case in indefinites is due to another reason than incorporation, or that this absence is due to something else in both bare and indefinite noun phrases. In Section 5, I argue for the latter.

## **4 Cased and caseless objects: are they so different?**

At least since Knecht (1986), the prevailing view in the literature regarding the distinction between cased and caseless objects is that they are derivationally related. The empirical footing for this view comes from the observation that

caseless objects are much harder to move away from their case-assigning verbs than cased objects, which are practically free in their distribution. The claim then is that arguments start the derivation caseless and get assigned case through a kind of A-movement after which further movement becomes possible. This has several incarnations in the literature, but the underlying logic is similar. For instance, following Diesing (1992), Kelepir (2001) claims that the movement freedom as well as definiteness effects noted in (2) are due to existential closure that cased objects in effect escape.

As attractive as it is, this idea is built on a shaky empirical ground. We have seen that focus particles routinely separate the caseless object from its verb as in (9). More notably, we see perfectly grammatical examples being reported such as (17) that cast doubt on the descriptive generalization that caseless arguments do not move.

In this section, I argue based on controlled information structural contexts that caseless objects can in fact move.

#### 4.1 Moved caseless objects in context

There is a clear difference between bare and indefinite caseless objects with respect to the kind of fronting exemplified in (17). While fronted bare objects can be acceptable as in (17) and (23), caseless indefinites are almost entirely unacceptable in this fronted position (22). Note that in (22), B is similarly unacceptable with and without the provided context.<sup>6</sup>

- (22) A: Bir aslanın boyu ne kadardır acaba?  
'I wonder how tall a lion is.'  
B: ?? Bir aslan<sub>i</sub> ben t<sub>i</sub> gör-dü-m. 2 metre var.  
one lion I see-PAST-1SG 2 meter exist  
'A lion, I've seen one. It's about 2 meters.'

If we contextualize a similar situation with a bare nominal in the discourse, we see that acceptable cases like Öztürk's easily arise.

- (23) A: Aslanların boyu ne kadardır acaba?  
'I wonder how tall lions are.'  
B: Aslan<sub>i</sub> ben t<sub>i</sub> gör-dü-m. 2 metre var.  
lion I see-PAST-1SG 2 meter exist  
'Lions, I've seen some. They're about 2 meters.'

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<sup>6</sup> In the case of such gradient grammatical judgements, as a principle I use question marks rather than an asterisk. The difference of grammaticality between (22) and (8), to my mind, is similar to the difference between center embedding and subject island violations in English.

This asymmetry suggests that the unacceptability in the movement of the caseless object in (23) is due to its indefinite character rather than being caseless. Further evidence that this restriction on fronting is more about indefiniteness than case comes from oblique objects. When indefinite, these objects show a similar restriction on fronting, such as an argument of the verb ‘come across’ requiring comitative case.

- (24) A: ‘I wonder how tall a lion is.’  
B: ?? Bir aslan-la<sub>i</sub> ben t<sub>i</sub> karşılaştı-m. 2 metre var.  
one lion-COM I come.across-PAST-1SG 2 meter exist  
‘A lion, I’ve come across one. It’s about 2 meters.’

Secondly, notice that indefinites can be moved into a more acceptable word order via extraposition to the right.<sup>7</sup> This suggests that it is really the combination of indefiniteness and fronting that is behind the unacceptable configuration.

- (25) A: ‘I wonder how tall a lion is.’  
B: ? Ben t<sub>i</sub> gör-dü-m bir aslan<sub>i</sub>. 2 metre var.  
I see-PAST-1SG one lion 2 meter exist  
‘I’ve SEEN a lion. It’s about 2 meters.’

The bare caseless object which can occur more freely even in the leftward topic position unsurprisingly has no problems occurring in the extraposed position.

- (26) A: ‘I wonder how tall lions are.’  
B: Ben t<sub>i</sub> gör-dü-m aslan<sub>i</sub>. 2 metre var.  
I see-PAST-1SG lion 2 meter exist  
‘I’ve SEEN lions. They’re about 2 meters.’

What could be going wrong with a fronted indefinite? Indefinites are known to make worse topics than generics (see, for instance Büring 1997). Indeed, this movement in Turkish brings about a topical reading of the fronted object (Kılıçaslan 2004). Extraposition, in comparison, indicates discourse givenness without topicality. If what is wrong with (22) is the presence of a topicalized indefinite, the pattern of grammaticality is explained. Indefinites cannot be topicalized (22), but generics can (23). Both can be backgrounded (25, 26).

Thus, even though initially it may look like caseless objects do not move away from their verb, it is rather the case that only indefinites are restricted in this way. This restriction is best explained as an illicit semantic configuration where an indefinite is topicalized. Thus, caselessness interacts with movement only indirectly, through the semantic configurations created.

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<sup>7</sup> I translate these examples into English with stress shift due to givenness.

## 4.2 Topicalization of cased objects

The claim that cased and caseless objects are syntactically related for the most part relies on the observation that cased objects are relatively freer to move. This seems to imply that overt case makes all movement better regardless of the content of the utterance. If this were the case, we would expect (22) and (23) to improve when accusative case is introduced in the same context. This is not at all the case. The resulting variant is morphosyntactically well-formed but entirely incoherent with the discourse.

- (27) A: Bir aslanın boyu ne kadardır acaba?  
‘I wonder how tall a lion is.’  
B: # Bir aslan- $1_i$  ben  $t_i$  gör-dü-m. 2 metre var.  
one lion-ACC I see-PAST-1SG 2 meter exist  
‘Of the lions, I’ve seen one. About 2 meters.’
- (28) A: Aslanların boyu ne kadardır acaba?  
‘I wonder how tall lions are.’  
B: # Aslan- $1_i$  ben  $t_i$  gör-dü-m. 2 metre var.  
lion I see-PAST-1SG 2 meter exist  
‘The lion, I’ve seen it. About 2 meters.’

(27) and (28) are acceptable in contexts where a known discourse referent can be accommodated. Notice that the indefinite, even with case marking, suffers in this topic position.

- (29) A: Hayvanat bahçesine yeni gelen hayvanların boyu ne kadardır acaba?  
‘I wonder how tall the new zoo animals are.’  
B: ? Bir aslan- $1_i$  ben  $t_i$  gör-dü-m. 2 metre var.  
one lion-ACC I see-PAST-1SG 2 meter exist  
‘Of the lions, I’ve seen one. About 2 meters.’
- (30) A: Hayvanat bahçesine yeni gelen aslanın boyu ne kadardır acaba?  
‘I wonder how tall the new lion at the zoo is.’  
B: Aslan- $1_i$  ben  $t_i$  gör-dü-m. 2 metre var.  
lion I see-PAST-1SG 2 meter exist  
‘The lion, I’ve seen it. About 2 meters.’

Clearly, accusative signals a semantic difference, but does not seem to correlate with movement. When the context allows for a known discourse referent, they topicalize straightforwardly, but case-marking is not a prerequisite to topicalization if the context does not allow such an interpretation.

In comparison to (23), examples like (29) and (30) are admittedly more typical. The reason might be that the semantic contribution of the case marker which is analyzed variably as definiteness, partitiveness or existential presupposition (see Özge 2011) is more readily compatible with the role of topic. Perhaps bare object topicalization is dispreferred because it constitutes an unnecessary departure from the base order to eventually yield a less optimal sentence. As Kılıçaslan (2004) shows, such departure is largely optional in Turkish.

### **4.3 Interim conclusion**

In sum, syntactically, both cased and caseless objects are moveable phrases. Caseless objects do not necessarily become moveable after they pick up accusative case. This being said, the semantic import of indefiniteness and accusative may restrict possible word order configurations. In the case of indefiniteness, there is a strong dispreference for topicalized indefinites across the board, whereas cased objects are so free presumably because they are natural topics due to their presuppositional import.

Thus the syntactic configuration behind accusative case *per se* is not responsible for making an object freer in syntax, but the semantic import that it creates indirectly determines its freedom. In conclusion, combined with Öztürk's (2005) arguments for pseudo- rather than head-incorporation, we see that cased and caseless objects are not so different after all.

## **5 Discussion**

We have seen that caselessness neither invariably leads to incorporation, nor is separated bluntly from cased arguments. My proposal is to analyze this  $\emptyset$  case as weak case in Turkish, in the sense of de Hoop (1992). Accusative is the corresponding strong case. Unlike NPs that may truly lack case, arguments with weak case are syntactically free.

This revision does not only cover both bare and indefinite objects as needed, but also provides an explanation for obligatorily caseless objects such as measure verb complements as in (8). These are neither indefinites nor instances of pseudo-incorporation, therefore it is otherwise mysterious why they are caseless.

Between cased and caseless objects, there is clearly a morphosyntactic link. Accusative may look like a semantic/pragmatic marker but it is also case in the traditional sense. This we understand from the fact that it is the only case that varies with  $\emptyset$  case, and from the word order shift in the presence of a second internal argument or an adjectival adverb (4 and 5). However I do not think

accusative objects are invariably in vP or higher positions. There are reasons to think they are lower (see Üntak-Tarhan 2006).

Between bare and indefinite objects, however, a morphosyntactic link is harder to argue for except for one phenomenon we have discussed, namely adjectival adverbs. The other phenomena seem to be more in the jurisdiction of semantics. After all, one has a numeral and one not, and it would not be surprising that the nominal with the numeral has more complex quantificational and referential properties than the one without. Of the properties of the bare caseless nominal, number neutrality, would be entirely expected, referential opacity can be related to the absence of the semantic contribution of the numeral, and lowest scope and atelic interpretations could potentially be derived from them. I will not attempt such a semantic analysis here, but indeed suggest that these be addressed with tools of semantics.<sup>8</sup>

If some of the related ungrammaticalities were semantic at heart, it would be possible to observe ameliorating effects of lexical semantics and pragmatics. This is exactly the case concerning the referential opacity of bare objects. Next to widely cited examples showing referential opacity, one can easily find cases where the bare object can introduce a discourse referent that can be referred to in the ensuing discourse. For instance, in the discourse in (31), the bare caseless object in (a) is referred to by the overt pronoun in (b), and the  $\emptyset$  pronoun in (c) (see similar examples in Persian in Krifka & Modarresi 2015).

(31) Bir saattir oğlanları izliyorum.

‘I’ve been watching the boys for the last hour.’

a. Emre portakal getir-iyor.

Emre orange bring-IMPERF

‘Emre does orange-bringing.’

b. Ali de on-u soy-uyor.

Ali CONN it-ACC peel-IMPERF

‘And Ali peels it.’

c. Ama sonra  $\emptyset$  ye-m-iyor-lar. Biriktir-iyor-lar.

but then eat-NEG-IMPERF-3PL save-IMPERF-3PL

‘But after that they don’t eat. They save.’

Telicity, similarly, is much less tightly connected to the type of object than previously thought. Counterexamples to the binary correspondence Aydemir presents exist in both directions. Neither does an indefinite caseless object make an event with a verb of perception telic (32a), nor does a bare object make an event with a verb of accomplishment atelic (32b).

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<sup>8</sup> I refer the reader to a promising novel account of a number of these restrictions in incorporated nominals by Krifka & Modarresi (2015).

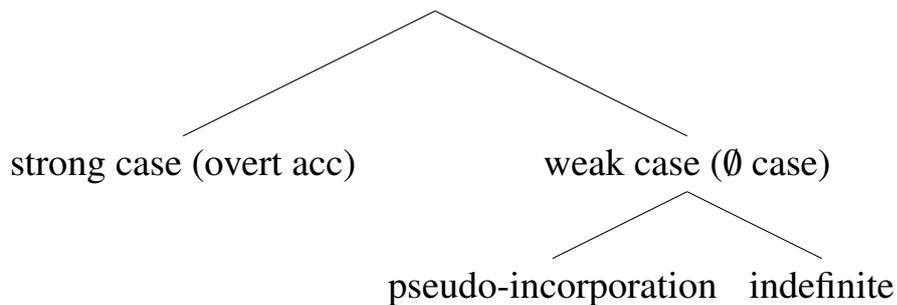
- (32) a. \* Ali iki saat-te bir kız gör-dü.  
 Ali two hours-LOC one girl see-PAST  
 ‘\*Ali saw a girl in two hours.’
- b. Elif iki ay-da tez yaz-dı.  
 Elif two month-LOC dissertation write-PAST  
 ‘Elif dissertated in two months.’

In stark contrast with these aspects that could potentially be addressed more intuitively in semantics, we have in our paradigm one case of the distribution of adjectival adverbs as in (14). This phenomenon does not seem as intuitively semantic as the others. Also, it is the only difference by which bare and indefinite caseless objects differ that has a visible word order dimension. Since cased objects also interact with these adverbials in terms of word order, this should be the first place to look for the syntactic configuration behind case in Turkish.

## 6 Conclusion

In this paper I have re-examined claims regarding caselessness and incorporation on the one hand and case and syntactic freedom on the other. I have argued that caselessness is not all incorporation. Only bare caseless objects can be said to incorporate, and specifically, pseudo-incorporate. What ties the two together is that  $\emptyset$  case is the realization of weak case in Turkish. As NPs with weak case, they enjoy a degree of syntactic freedom than head-incorporated nominals. The resulting taxonomy looks like the following:

(33)



As usual, upon closer examination facts turn out to be more complicated than they initially appear. However, I believe with this more rigorous empirical background we can ask more interesting, more well-structured questions probing the typology of incorporation and the role of syntax, semantics and their interface in shaping what counts as incorporated and what is not.

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