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Some Observations On The Nominal Compounds In Turkish

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Abstract

This paper focuses on the asymmetry observed in the realization of the compound marker -(s)I(n). When there is a sub-compound in the possessor position of a larger compound, this morpheme is realized. On the other hand, when the (so-called) sub-compound is in the possessee position of the larger compound, it does not show up. The question that arises at this point is whether it is deleted or never realized. The present paper makes a minimalist analysis of these compounds. It proposes that they have different structures and it is misleading to seek for a parallelism between them. While there are multiple domains for agreement for the former case, there is only one agreement domain for the latter case. It is also maintained that there is no sub-compound of a larger compound in the former case. Rather, there is only one compound in such constructions which has got more than two constituents. It is asserted here that there is no deletion, restriction or ban on the re-occurrence of this morpheme. It simply never re-occurs.

Keywords*:* Turkish; minimalist syntax; nominal compounds; -(s)I(n) morpheme.

1. Introduction

The present paper focuses on the NN(s)I(n) compounds in Turkish and provides some minimalist analyses on their inner structures. Such compounds are historically related to the genitive- possessive constructions in which the possessive suffixes are used in the second constituent of the constructions in combination with the genitive case marker added to the first item:

(1) Ev-in kapı-sı
house-GEN door-3SgPOSS
'the door of the house'

(2) Sen-in oda-n
you-GEN room-2SgPOSS
'your room'

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In these examples, the constituents of the constructions are in a possessor- possessee relationship in which the first constituent is the possessor of the second one. On the other hand, the NN-(s)I(n) compounds, which are also known as indefinite nominal compounds, do not contain the genitive case marker:

(3) diş fırça-sı
tooth brush-(s)I(n)
'toothbrush'

(4) okul zil-i
school bell-(s)I(n)
'school bell'

The second constituent of the indefinite nominal compounds carries the -(s)I(n) morpheme which is historically related to the third person singular possessive (3SgPOSS). These morphemes have got the same phonological shape and they are in a complementary distribution, and for these reasons, the -(s)I(n) morpheme has often been analyzed as a possessive marker (Lewis, 1967; Dede, 1978; Kornfilt, 1984; Yükseker, 1987; 1998). As Kornfilt (1984, pp. 60-62) maintains, in such constructions, when the host is referential, an overt structural case is assigned. However, when the host is non-referential, a phonologically null counterpart is assigned. According to her, the structures of the constructions such as *kadının hakları* (the rights of the woman) and *kadın hakları* (woman rights) should be the same. She asserts that they only differ in specifity and specific/referential nouns must be genitive-marked.

On the other hand, it should be noted that this morpheme does not establish a possessive relationship between the constituents of the compound. Therefore, it is treated as a unique compound marker by some other scholars (Swift, 1963; van Schaaik, 2002; Göksel, 2009). As Swift (1963) states, this morpheme in indefinite nominal compounds does not function as a referent to a third person who possesses something, but functions just as a compound marker. Similarly, as Aslan & Altan (2006) points out, the lexical entity being referred to is always signified by the second constituent which is the 'head' of the compound in such constructions. The first constituent which is the 'modifier' of the compound simply acts as specifying or restricting the meaning of the second constituent.

In the literature, there are different views on the inner structure of the nominal compounds, especially on that of NN-(s)I(n) constructions. While some scholars claim that a separate morphological module is responsible for their constructions (Schroeder, 1999; van Schaaik, 2002; Aslan & Altan, 2006; Kunduracı, 2013), some others assert that this process takes place in overt syntax (Yükseker, 1998; Bağrıaçık & Ralli, 2013; Erguvanlı Taylan & Öztürk Başaran, 2014). Tat (2013), on the other hand, suggests a post-syntactic analysis for their constructions. The present study aims to provide a syntactic analysis for their inner structures within the minimalist framework.

1.1.The DP domain

Although different projections are suggested (see Tat, 2013 or Erguvanlı Taylan & Öztürk Başaran, 2014, for instance) for the derivational process of the nominal compounds in Turkish, there seems to be a consensus on the view that there exists one or more functional layers in such constructions where the compounding process take place. The DP layer appears to be the most plausible position where it happens. As Tuğcu (2009) also asserts, there should be a DP layer in possessive constructions in which the person-number agreement takes place. As she further points out, DP is a suitable functional category where such agreement takes place. According to her the first constituent of the compound raises to the spec DP position to check its features with the second constituent that exists in the head position. Erguvanlı-Taylan & Öztürk-Başaran (2014) make a similar assertion. According to them, the GEN

comes into play in the DP domain. Similarly, according to Tat (2013), the NN-(s)I(n) constructions are also underlyingly possessive DPs. As she asserts, the first noun bears a phonologically null genitive case and the compound-final marker is a possessive agreement marker. She claims that the genitive case is responsible for triggering agreement in a local domain (the DP). According to Özgen (2018), the NN-(s)I(n) compounds are bare DPs, which only bear possessive marking. On the other hand, the definite nominal compounds bear genitive-possessive agreement in the DP domain.

In this paper, it is supported that the first constituents of both types move to the spec DP position. Following Kornfilt (1984), it is asserted here that the host is assigned the overt structural case GEN when it is referential. Yet, it is assigned a phonologically null counterpart when it is non-referential. The following constructions exemplify these cases respectively:

(5) [DP okul-un [NP {okul}{zil}] zil-i]

school-GEN bell-3SgPOSS

'the bell of the school'

(6) [DP okul [NP {okul}{zil}] zil-i]

school bell-(s)I(n)

'school bell'

1.2. Statement of the problem

When a nominal compound has a complex structure in which another compound is a sub-compound of it, there seems to arise a puzzling case. The (s)I(n) morpheme does not show up twice in such cases. To be more precise, when the indefinite nominal compound is in the possessee position of a larger compound, the compound suffix cannot co-occur with the compound/possessive marker of the other compound. As Tat (2013) puts forward, whether the compound marker is deleted in the presence of the other marker or whether it never gets realized in the first place is a mystery (p. 40).

After analyzing such structures, van Schaaik (1996) proposes that the --(s)I(n) morpheme belongs to the entire structure in right-branching compounds, that is, in the structures where the sub-compound forms the second constituent of the larger compound. She asserts that this morpheme is never realized for the second time rather than being deleted. She puts forward that this morpheme is not added until all nouns are combined. According to her, this process explains why there appears only one -(s)I(n) in such structures (pp. 156-157).

On the other hand, there are several other studies which stand against the assertions of van Schaaik (1996). They indicate that the sub-compound is formed before the construction of the larger compound. Therefore, there should have been two -(s)I(n) morphemes in such structures similar to the left-branching compounds. The following constructions provided by Kunduracı (2013) exemplify these cases respectively.

(7) *(Ankara (masal tiyatro-su) -su)

Ankara tale theatre-(s)I(n) (-(s)I(n))

'Int: Ankara tale theatre'

(8) ((masal tiyatro-su) ekib-i)

tale theatre-(s)I(n) team-(s)I(n)

'team for a tale theatre'

As Kunduracı (2013) states, both the whole NNC and the sub-NNC *masal tiyatro-su* (tale theatre) take -(s)I(n) in (8). In (7), however, the addition of -(s)I(n) for the second time is problematic. As she further points out, it is necessary to determine whether -(s)I(n) in (7) belongs to the whole compound or to the sub-compound only. If -(s)I(n) belongs to the whole compound, the structure is [[N[N-N]]- (s)I(n)]; however, it remains unanswered why the sub-compound lacks its own -(s)I(n). On the other hand, if it belongs to the sub-compound only, the structure will be [N [[N-N]- (s)I(n)]]. She claims that it should be determined why -(s)I(n) is not suffixed for the second time in this case. That is to say, why we do not have *[N[[N-N-(s)I(n)]]-(s)I(n)]. She proposes that the latter structure is correct. That is, the compound marker belongs to the sub-compound in such examples. With regard to the nonappearance of another -(s)I(n) for the whole compound, she asserts that it must arise from a "morphological" ban which disallows -(s)I(n) suffixation for the second time: the identity avoidance (p. 14). She further asserts that there is a non-parallelism between left-branching and right-branching compounds since there is no ban on -(s)I(n) in the former type (p.15).

A similar case is observed when the larger compound is a genitive-possessive construction rather than an NNC. That is to say, when the sub-compound forms the second constituent of a larger compound – no matter it is a PC or NNC- the -(s)I(n) suffix does not show up. Kornfilt (1984), who focuses on the nominal compounds embedded in a possessive construction, supports the deletion hypothesis and states that this morpheme is deleted due to the presence of the possessive agreement. She provides the following examples (p.60):

(9) a. *Benim yarış araba-sı-m
I-GEN race car-(s)I(n)-1SgPOSS
'Int: my race car'

b. Benim yarış araba-m
I-GEN race car-1SgPOSS
'My race car'

She argues that deletion in (9b) is triggered by the categorial identity of the two morphemes. In other words, the -(s)I(n) morpheme is deleted due to the presence of the first person agreement marker –(I)m. A similar structure is analyzed by Bağrıaçık et.al. (2017):

(10) Çağla'nın yemek *oda-sı-sı
Çağla-GEN food room-(s)I(n)-3SgPOSS
'Int: Çağla's dining room'

They state that the N-N-(s)I(n) compound, *yemek odası* (dining room) in (7) is embedded under a genitive-possessive construction, and is restricted by the genitive possessor. They point out that the compound marker is not realized because of the occurrence of the possessive agreement marker (p. 51).

The same problem is examined by Göksel & Haznedar (2008) as well. As they state, when both a compound marker and the possessive marker are semantically required, only one of them (the possessive marker) surfaces. They provide the following examples:

(11) a. diş fırça-sı
tooth brush-(s)I(n)
'tooth brush'

b. fırça-m
brush-1SgPOSS
'my brush'

c. *diş fırça-sı-m

tooth brush-(s)I(n)-1SgPOSS

'Int: my tooth brush'

d. diş fırça-m

tooth brush-1SgPOSS

'my tooth brush'

In a similar vein, Aslan & Altan (2006) indicate that the compound marker drops when the possessive suffix is attached to a nominal compound (p.61):

(12) * evrak çanta-sı m

brief case-(s)I(n)-1SgPOSS

'Int. my briefcase'

Hence, this study mainly focuses on the problem why the compound marker -(s)I(n) is not realized twice in the structures where the sub-compound is the second constituent of the larger construction.

2. The proposal

This paper proposes that the compound marker (s)I(n) is not realized twice in the structures such as (7) at all. Therefore, it would be wrong to assume that there is a ban, restriction or deletion for the re-occurrence of this morpheme. It is asserted here that this marker is realized only once and it belongs to the entire structure. In this respect, the present paper supports the analysis put forward by van Schaaik (1996). What is new in the present paper is that it aims to demonstrate why this morpheme cannot be realized twice as long as the minimalist postulations are regarded. To be more precise, it maintains that it is not possible to realize this morpheme for the second time when we take into consideration the basic arguments of the Minimalist Program for syntactic derivations. That is to say, the minimalist account does not provide a domain where this morpheme can be realized twice.

Before moving ahead, however, it is necessary to touch upon the basic operations of the minimalist processing. Within minimalism, the projections are built up in a bottom-up fashion by using two basic operations: *select & merge* and *copy & move.* That is to say, we select two items from the Numeration and merge them together to form a phrase. The target projection extends as we merge new items to it. The *copy & move* operation can also be applied during this process when it is necessary to check an uninterpretable feature that exists in the derivation.

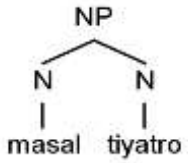
In turn to the NN-(s)I(n) constructions, these minimalist operations do not create a domain where the compound marker can be realized twice. To illustrate:

(7') *(Ankara (masal tiyatro-su) -su)

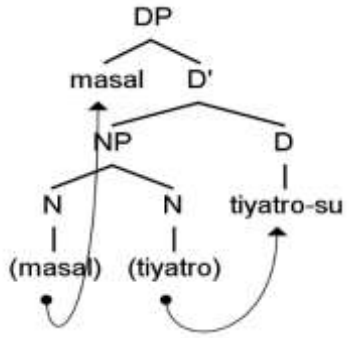
Ankara tale theatre-(s)I(n) (-(s)I(n))

'Ankara tale theatre'

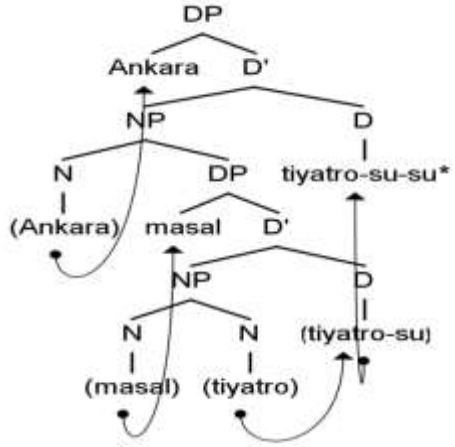
In the first stage of the derivation, we select the items *masal* (tale) and *tiyatro* (theatre) and merge them together to form an NP:



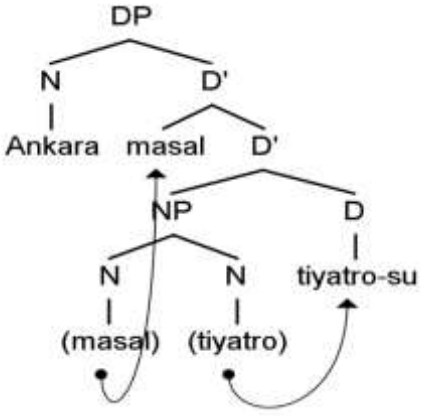
In the next stage, a functional phrase should merge to the derivation. It is assumed to be the DP domain in this paper, but it can also be any other functional domain such as nP or AgrP. That is to say, there is a functional domain over the NP (no matter what we call it) where the compound marker is added:



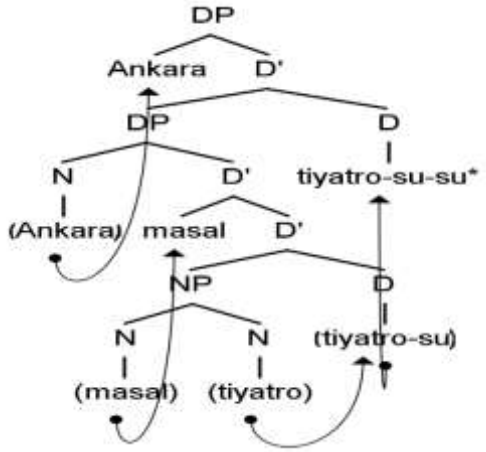
Without a doubt, the constituent *Ankara* must merge to the derivation in the next stage, but how should we merge it to the derivation? In other words, how should the projection proceed? There seems to be two possibilities. The first one is that it first merges with the DP to form another NP. Then, another DP domain is merged where the compound marker can be added for the second time:



This option is not the right track to follow because the lower DP is the head of the upper NP in this derivation. It should be noted that only minimal projections can occupy the head positions in generative framework. The maximal projections such as the DP here cannot be the head of a phrase. Since the "*N"* *Ankara* is not the "head", this option is not applicable. For this reason, the third component of the compound cannot merge to the derivation in this way. Hence, in this process, the upper DP layer where the compound marker can be realized for the second time never shows up. The other option is as follows:

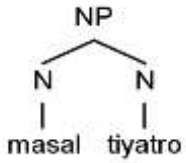


In this option, the constituent *Ankara* merges to the derivation in the second specifier position of the DP, which indicates vital problems as well. First of all, the DP has already completed its criterion by forming the target compound in a spec-head checking relationship. After accomplishing its criterion, why should another constituent merge to its spec position? This operation seems to be rather ad hoc. Even so, what would be the next step of the derivation? It is for sure that the D head cannot get into another spec-head relationship at this point. Therefore, another functional layer is needed to form the larger compound. Hence, another DP must merge over the existing DP to that end:

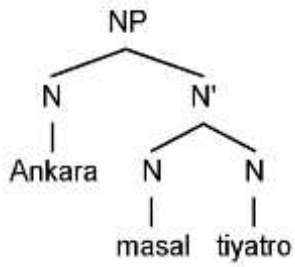


The tree derivation above is neither plausible nor convincing. It does not fit into the basic arguments of the minimalist framework, either. After accomplishing the spec-head checking in a functional domain, nothing can merge into that phrase any more for any further operations. Besides, merging another DP layer over the existing one is rather ad hoc, either. In brief, this option is not applicable as long as the minimalist way of projection is taken into account. Then, how would this construction be derived in a bottom-up fashion? The present paper proposes the following stages:

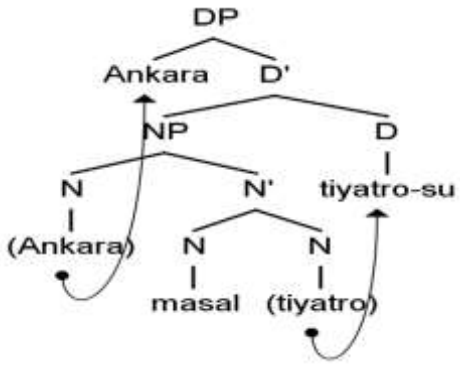
First of all, the nouns *masal* (tale) and *tiyatro* (theatre) merge:



Then, the other noun *Ankara* merges to the derivation in the specifier position of the NP. It is proposed here that all nominals merge in the derivation before the compound /possessive markers are added:



In the following stage, the NP merges with the DP domain, where agreement marker is added. As it has been stated before, it can be any other functional layer instead of the DP, as well:



As it is demonstrated here, the derivation never gets at a stage where the compound marker can be realized twice. The present analysis creates a non-parallelism between left-branching and right-branching compounds. (7) and (8) above are repeated below as (11) and (12) to exemplify these cases:

(11) *(Ankara (masal tiyatro-su) -su)

Ankara tale theatre-(s)I(n) (-(s)I(n))

'Ankara tale theatre'

(12) ((masal tiyatro-su) ekib-i)

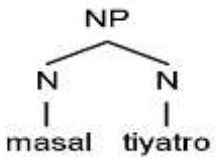
tale theatre-(s)I(n) team-(s)I(n)

'team for a tale theatre'

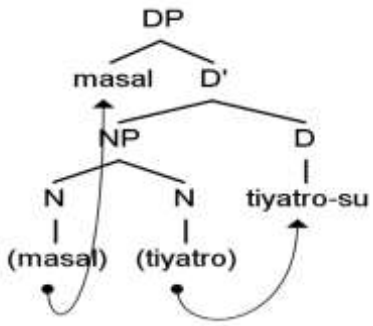
The question that arises at this point is why we should seek for a parallelism between these structures. This paper proposes that these compounds have different structures and it is misleading to seek for a parallelism between them. For the former construction, there is only one functional domain over the NP layer where the constituents of the compound merge. On the other hand, there are two functional layers in the latter construction. As a matter of fact, it would be wrong to assume that there is a sub-compound of a larger compound in this case. It is asserted here that there is only one compound in such constructions which has got three constituents.

Hence, in (12), there are two different DPs, one of which merges into the derivation in the specifier position of another NP. The derivational stages for this construction are as follows:

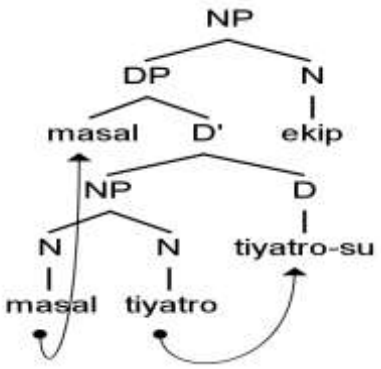
First of all, the nouns *masal* (tale) and *tiyatro* (theatre) merge forming an NP:



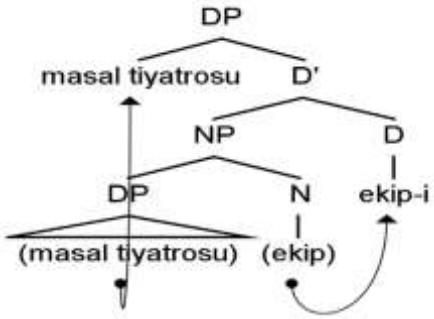
This NP does not contain any other constituents; therefore, no other item merges into the phrase. This maximal projection merges with the DP domain where the agreement marker -(s)I(n) is added:



In the following stage, the DP merges with another head noun forming another NP. That is to say, the sub-compound merges into the derivation in the specifier position of another NP:



In the final stage, the upper NP merges with the DP domain. The whole sub-compound moves to the specifier position of this phrase while the head *ekip* (crew) moves to its head position. The compound marker -(s)I(n) is added for the second time here:



As the derivational stages for these constructions display, there is no parallelism between the target structures. It is misleading to expect for the occurrence of the compound marker twice in the first construction. It should be noted that there is only one head noun in this case which forms a compound, namely, *tiyatro* (theatre). The other nominals, *Ankara* and *masal* (tale) should merge with this head to form the NP. As a matter of fact, there is indeed no sub-compound here, but only one compound that is formed around a head noun that takes more than one modifier. Therefore, the compound marker is realized only once. It is proposed here that there is no deletion, restriction or ban on the re-occurrence of this morpheme. It simply never re-occurs.

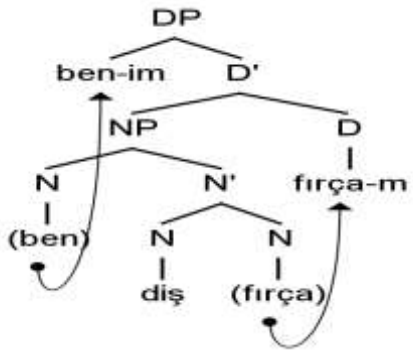
On the other hand, the other construction contains two different heads, which form different NPs and DPs. Since the DP is the functional domain where agreement marking takes place, it is rather reasonable that the compound marker is realized twice in such constructions. Support for this claim comes from Tat (2013). She asserts that there are multiple domains for agreement in such cases and each of the DPs must have its own agreement morphology. For the structures such as (11); however, she maintains that there is a single domain for agreement (p.115).

Due to the same reason, the -(s)I(n) morpheme is not realized in the cases where the nominal compounds are embedded in possessive constructions, either. The following tree derivation exemplifies this case:

(13) Ben-im diş fırça-m

Me-GEN tooth brush-1SgPOSS

'My tooth brush'



In this derivation the head noun *fırça* (brush) first merges with another noun *diş* (tooth) forming an N'. Then, the pronominal *ben* (I) merges to the derivation in the spec NP position. In the final stage, the NP merges with the DP domain where the genitive case and the possessive marker are realized. It should be noticed that the pronominal *ben* (I) moves to the spec DP position rather than the nominal *diş* (tooth) since it is always the closest constituent that is attracted for movement.

Hence, as it is demonstrated here, the compound marker -(s)I(n) is not realized in this construction. Only the third person singular possessive marker is realized through the spec-head checking relationship in the DP domain. There is no suitable domain where the -(s)I(n) morpheme may be realized.

As a matter of fact, there are other structures where this morpheme is not realized at all. For instance:

(14) domates salça-sı
tomato paste -(s)I(n)
'tomato paste'

(15) *a. domates salça-sı-lı
tomato paste-(s)I(n)-lI

b. domates salça-lı
tomato paste-lI
'with tomato paste'

The -(s)I(n) morpheme that is realized in the compound *domates salçası* (tomato paste) does not occur in the presence of the derivational morpheme –lI which derives adjectives out of nouns.

As for plularization in compounds, the plural morpheme –lAr is realized before the compound marker -(s)I(n). For example:

(16) *a. okul zil-i-ler
school bell--(s)I(n)-PL

b. okul zil-ler-i
school bell-PL-(s)I(n)
'school bells'

What the examples (14) and (15) suggest is that the compound marker -(s)I(n) is not the absolute marker that is realized in the first functional domain over the NP layer. It must be the case that the constituents such as *domates* (tomato) and *salça* (paste) merge in the NP domain and the structure of the upper levels of the derivation is variational in accordance with the intended message. Therefore, it would be wrong to assume that the -(s)I(n) morpheme is an absolute part of such constructions and its deficiency should stem from a restriction, ban or deletion.

3. Conclusion

The present paper focuses on the realization of the compound marker -(s)I(n) in complex compounds. When the sub-compound forms the second constituent of the larger compound, the -(s)I(n) marker is added to the sub-compound. On the other hand, when the (so-called) sub-compound forms the first constituent of the larger compound, it is not realized. The present paper proposes that such compounds have different structures and it is misleading to seek for a parallelism between them. While there are multiple domains for agreement for the former case, there is only one agreement domain for the latter case. This agreement domain has been proposed to be the DP domain. It is also maintained that there is no sub-compound of a larger compound in the former case. Rather, there is only one compound in such constructions which has got more than two constituents. It is asserted here that there is no deletion, restriction or ban on the occurrence of this morpheme. It simply never re-occurs.

The assertions of the present study lean on the basic arguments of the Minimalist Program. It is for sure that the minimalist syntax is not the only option that a scholar can follow. The studies which adapt other frameworks or approaches may provide different analyses on the target subject-matter and this is rather reasonable. However, within the minimalist agenda, the bottom-up merging process never gets into a stage where the -(s)I(n) morpheme can be realized twice.

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Türkçedeki adsıl bileşikler üzerine bazı gözlemler

Öz

Bu çalışma bileşik sözcüklere eklenen -(s)I(n) biçimbiriminin kullanımında gözlemlenen bakışımsızlığa odaklanmaktadır. Bir bileşiğin ilk öğesi konumunda bir alt bileşiğin bulunduğu durumlarda bu biçimbirim kullanılmaktadır. Öte yandan, (alanyazında var olduğu iddia edildiği şekliyle) bir alt bileşik, ana bileşiğin ikinci öğesi konumunda ise, bahsi geçen bu biçimbirim ortaya çıkmamaktadır. Bu noktada ortaya bu biçimbirimin silindiği mi yoksa hiç kullanılmadığı mı sorusu karşımıza çıkmaktadır. Mevcut çalışma Yetinmeci Çizgi bağlamında bir çözümleme önermekte olup yukarıda betimlenen bileşik türlerinin farklı yapılara sahip olduğunu savunmakta ve bu türler arasında bir paralellik aramanın yanıltıcı olacağını iddia etmektedir. İlk durumdaki bileşikler için birden fazla sayıda uyum alanı mevcut iken, ikinci durum için sadece tek bir uyum alanı vardır. Bunun yanı sıra, ilk türdeki bileşikler için ana bileşiğin içerisinde bir alt bileşiğin var olmadığı ileri sürülmektedir. Aksine, bu tür yapılarda, bünyesinde ikiden fazla öğe barındıran tek bir bileşik mevcuttur. Bu çalışmada, bahsi geçen bu biçimbirim üzerinde herhangi bir silme, kısıtlama ya da yasaklama işlemi olmadığı savunulmaktadır. Basit bir ifadeyle, bu biçimbirim ikinci kez hiç ortaya çıkmamaktadır.

Anahtar sözcükler: Türkçe; yetinmeci sözdizim; adsıl bileşikler; -(s)I(n) biçimbirimi

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