

Abstract

The Yes/No Question Marker in the Turkish Language: Its syntactic distribution and its irregular stress

A focus phrase (FP) analysis is proposed by Kahnemuyipour and Kornfilt (2011) (K&K) to account for the irregular stress behaviour of the yes/no question marker (Q) in verbal constructions in Turkish. K&K shows Q being merged in a high focus position above T/AgrP in verbs having a simple syntactic construction or it being merged in a low vP-internal focus position above T/A/MP in verbs with a verbal copula in a complex syntactic construction. They propose that Q is the head of FP, and that it attracts its complement (a small clause) to its specifier. They say this movement is accompanied by prosodic prominence emerging on the moved constituent and leave it at that without further analysis. Kiss (1998) discusses the distinction between identificational focus and informational focus, the former involves movement into the scope position in the specifier of a functional projection and expresses exhaustive information while the latter is not associated with movement and is marked by one or more pitch accents. The feature specification [+contrastive] and [+exhaustive] proposes a strong identificational focus which preposes into spec-FP. With the contrast between the two different focuses, K&K's proposal supports Q in Turkish as the head of FP being of the identificational type focus. Being a right headed language, Q acts as an operator moving its complement to the specifier in the narrow scope position with main stress falling on the right peripheral. This explains the irregular stress pattern of Q which attributes main stress to the preceding syllable.

References:

- Kahnemuyipour & Kornfilt (2011). The Syntax and Prosody of Turkish 'Pre-stressing' Verbs. In *Interfaces in Linguistics New Research Perspectives*, ed. R. Rolli and C. Ulbrich, 205-221.
- Kiss, Katalin É. (1998). Identification focus and information focus. *Language*, 74, 245-273