

Verb Doubling: I can but I will not!

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Overview: The phenomenon under the investigation of this study is verb doubling in Turkish. In a construction as in (1), we see that the verb *gelmek* (to come) is doubled in such a way it both occurs in its base and in its doubled positions. In the doubled position, however, it is in an infinitive form. Besides, this doubled verb contributes to the meaning of the clause and adds a contrastive focus reading.

(1) *Gelmeye gelirim de annem kızar.*
Come-INF-DAT Come-AOR-1SG but mom-1SG get angry-3SG
'I could come but my mother would be angry.'

(2) *Gelirim de annem kızar.*
Come-AOR-1SG but mom-1SG vget angry-3SG
'I can come but my mother would be angry.'

(2) assures the hearer that the activity *can* be done in return of a consequence. However, it gives a meaning that the activity is avoided in order not to face the consequence stated. So, we obtain an interpretation like "I can but I will not (because I do not want to face a punishment for it)".

Theoretical Background: Landau (2006), in a study on Hebrew V(P) fronting, argues that the fronted constructions have the following features and shows the data in (3).

- i. The fronted element is interpreted as topic/contrastive focus
- ii. The fronted verbs bear high pitch accent
- iii. The fronted verb spelled out as an infinitive
- iv. the arguments of the verb may be carried along or stranded
- v. the dependency is unbounded but island-sensitive, hence formed by A-bar movement

(3) *Lirkod, Gil lo yirkod ba-xayim*
To-dance Gil not will-dance in-the-life
'As for dancing, Gil will never dance.'

Sevgi (2021) investigates verb doubling in the Trabzon dialect of Turkish. In contrast to the data under the investigation of this study, Sevgi's data lack the dative case marking in the doubled form, yet it still has the -mE/A verbal noun. Furthermore, while the doubling observed in the Trabzon dialect is local to this region and seen "marginal and unacceptable" to the standard Turkish speaker, the data this study investigates is in a standard form used by every speaker of the Turkish language. Sevgi argues that the doubling observed in this dialect is a result of syntactic phenomenon and that the movement process is triggered by a focus feature.

Proposal: To begin with its phonological aspect, it should be noted that these constructions, an example of which is seen in (4), bears high pitch accent in its fronted element, which

supports the assumption that this doubling is a result of the Late Insertion model, which refers to the hypothesis that phonological expressions of syntactic terminals is in all cases provided in the mapping of PF (Harley, 1999).

- (4) Kóşmaya koşarım da terlerim.
Run-INF-DAT run-AOR-1SG sweat-AOR-1SG
'I could run but I would sweat.'

Similarly, they give a contrastive focus reading, too. Following Abels (2000) in Russian VP fronting, this study also suggests that VP-adverbs can join the fronted VP while S-adverbs cannot do so since VP fronting does not target projections higher than VP. I tested the island-sensitivity with *wh*-islands in Turkish for this structure and achieved the following:

- (5) a. Ali [Chomsky'nin kitabını] okumaya okur da anlamaz.
Ali Chomsky-GEN book-POSS-ACC read-INF-DAT read-AOR-3SG but understand-NEG-3SG
'Ali could read Chomsky's book but he would not understand.'
- b. ??Ali [kimin kitabını] okumaya okur da anlamaz?
Ali who-GEN book-POSS-ACC read-INF-DAT read-AOR-3SG understand-NEG-3SG
'Whose book could Ali read but not understand?'
Intended meaning: Ali could read whose book and not understand.

These dependencies are island-sensitive as seen in (5), and they also lose the contrastive focus reading they naturally have. Rather, they surface a meaning that would entail a trivial question. This different interpretation we receive further supports the sensitivity to *wh*-islands.

Conclusion: One can see that Turkish follows Hebrew to a great extent in terms of VP doubling. Based on this assumption, I argue that these constructions follow Landau (2006)'s account and they are formed by A-bar movement, I also hypothesize that since Hebrew does not have scrambling on the contrary to Turkish, the testing for island sensitivity results in strict ungrammaticality while we receive an ambiguous reading in (5b) that does not possess any contrastive reading which is contrary to constructions under the investigation of this study.

References:

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