

A compositional approach to conjunct agreement in Turkish

Turkish displays the following agreement patterns in a coordinate conjunction structure. Items (1) – (3) have identical meanings.

- (1) ?Sen ve o git-ti-n
 you and he go-PAST-2sg
 “You and he went”
- (2) Sen ve o git-ti
 you and he go-PAST-3sg
- (3) Sen ve o git-ti-niz
 you and he go-PAST-2pl

(1) is an instance of First Conjunct Agreement (FCA); (2) Closest Conjunct Agreement (CCA), since the verb agrees with the conjunct that is linearly more proximate¹; and (3) Full Agreement (FA). While (1) is unacceptable to most native speakers of Turkish, (2) and (3) are grammatical.

Two approaches to conjunct agreement categorize it as either (i) involvement of clausal category coordination (Aoun, Benmamoun, & Sportiche, 1994), or (ii) involvement of NP/DP coordination (“phrasal coordination”) (Munn, 1999). The purpose of this study is two-fold. The theoretical goal is to demonstrate, based on tests such as Right Node Raising, Gapping, and VP ellipsis, that the nature of conjunct agreement in Turkish is phrasal rather than clausal. The empirical goal is to provide evidence to account for the discrepancies observed in the agreement patterns in coordinate conjunction structures in Turkish.

To test conjunct agreement preferences of Turkish speakers, 112 sentences were created where the verb agreed with the first conjunct (44 items); the closest conjunct (44 items); or the conjunction phrase (24 items). Each sentence included 2 pronouns. All possible configurations including each pronoun was tested. 10 native speakers judged each sentence on a Likert scale from *completely natural* to *completely unnatural*. Below are the preliminary results.

Table 1. Conjunct agreement preferences in Turkish

Agreement with...	Completely natural	Natural	Undecided	Unnatural	Completely unnatural
First conjunct (FCA)	3.4	1.7	1.7	7.9	85.2
Closest conjunct (CCA/LCA)	26.2	22.7	4.6	18	28.2
Conjunction Phrase (FA)	41.6	40.6	3.1	8.3	6.2

As illustrated in Table 1, native speakers accept CCA and FA but find FCA ungrammatical. An interesting finding is that the identity of the conjuncts (1/2/3 person singular or plural) interacted with the preferences of participants since they gave higher acceptability ratings when the verb agreed with the first-person pronouns, no matter whether they were the first or the closest conjunct.

Based on these preliminary results, it is proposed that there is compositional conjunct agreement in Turkish that takes place in two stages (as in Bhatia, 2011; Franck et al. 2002; Ackema and Neeleman 2004; Haskell and MacDonald 2005; Benmamoun and Lorimor 2006). The agreement relationship is first established between the T head and the coordinated phrase in the syntactic component. Following this, the PF spells out the features of either the coordinated phrase as a whole, or the features of the linearly closest conjunct inside the coordinated phrase. That is, conjunct agreement in Turkish is a result of hierarchical structural relations in the case of full agreement where the conjunction phrase c-commands the T and V head, but is also affected by linear proximity (a similar account is proposed for Hindi in Bhatia, 2011). Although the study is ongoing (data collection to be completed by October 2017), I plan to investigate conjunct agreement in other head final languages to reveal whether such a compositional approach finds support.

¹ (2) in this case is also Last Conjunct Agreement (LCA).