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Title:  Turkish Scrambling: A Configurational Account

Date:  Friday, May 4, 2007  
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Place:  Linguistics Seminar Room (201)  
        370 Temple St

Abstract:

Although canonically SOV, Turkish allows much greater freedom of word order than many other scrambling languages. While many ordering phenomena have been explained in terms of discourse factors (Erguvanlı 1984), syntactic accounts have struggled to reconcile the extensive scrambling possibilities with an underlying structure. One response has been to reanalyze Turkish as a non-configurational language (Öztürk 2005).

In this paper, it will be demonstrated that a wide range of scrambling phenomena can be derived without having to appeal to non-configurationality. A generative syntax of the Turkish clause is proposed, incorporating an articulated clausal periphery (Rizzi 1997). Preverbal scrambling is analyzed as movement to functional specifier positions, motivated by the need to check pragmatic features on constituents, while post-verbal scrambled elements are considered to be adjoined to CP. Under this framework, Turkish is analyzed as a universally configurational, topic prominent, pro-drop language.