

# Complement Clauses and Pragmatic Islands in Turkish

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## Abstract

The study focused on the functionality of the Factive Island Constraint and Negative Island Constraint in Turkish. It also aimed to find out if any extraction out of complement clauses is also problematic in this language even when factiveness and negation are out of question. The island constraints such as the Wh-island Constraint, Complex NP Island Constraint, Adjunct Island Constraint and Sentential Subject Constraint were previously analyzed (Özsoy, 1996; Arslan, 1999; Görgülü, 2006; akır, 2015; 2016 e.g.) in Turkish context. The present study, on the other hand, focused on 2 island constraints that had not been studied beforehand: Factive Island Constraint and Negative Island Constraint. After combining the data of the present study with the ones obtained in the previous studies, it would be possible to have a holistic approach to “Wh-phrase” “Island Constraint” and “Adjunct & Argument Asymmetry” phenomena in Turkish.

The data of the study were obtained from 740 participants. They are the students of Hacettepe University in Turkey. They are all native speakers of Turkish and they had no formal education on island phenomena beforehand. Their ages ranged from 18 to 26 (mean age: 21.7). The data were collected through a Grammaticality Judgment Test, in which the participants were asked to rate the wh-questions produced from declarative sentences in +2,-2 Likert scale, a Missing Word Completion Test, in which the participants were required to fill in the given gaps in the target sentences and a Self-Paced Reading Test, in which the participants were asked to read the sentences in the computer screen in their own paces by using the keyboard while their response times were counted.

According to the findings of the study:

(1) All movements out of subordinate clauses in Turkish are subject to weak or strong islands. To be more precise, along with the extractions out of subjects and adjuncts, the extractions out of complement clauses in Turkish are also problematic in Turkish. Such structures are subject to a weak Complex DP Island Constraint. That is to say, the DP which exists above the subordinate complement clause constitutes an island for the upper movement of the elements.

(2) Different types of wh-adjuncts behave differently within the islands. The acceptability of wh-adverbials, which NP constructions and nominal wh-adjuncts differs from one another. As a matter of fact, there exists the following sequence for the acceptability of wh-elements in Turkish: wh-arguments > nominal wh-adjuncts > which NP constructions > wh-adverbials. The reason for this situation should be the merging points of these elements and their (non)nominal characteristics. That is, while the operators of the wh-arguments merge to the derivation directly in the matrix CP as asserted by the Unselective Binding Approach (Aoun and Li, 1993), the operators of the wh-adjuncts merge to the derivation along with the wh-item and move upwards. This movement, however, is subject to island effects. As for nominal wh-adjuncts and which NP constructions, they seem to be using the spec DP position as an escape hatch to escape island violation.

(3) Factive Island Constraint and Negative Island Constraint should not be considered as syntactic islands in Turkish. Rather, the degradation observed in the acceptability of the interrogative sentences in the existence of these islands should stem from pragmatic reasons

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such as processing load and pragmatic demands. Besides, the weak Complex DP Island Constraint that is assumed to hold for all complement clauses in this language seems to be one of the reasons for the degradation in such structures. That is to say, while such structures are usually semantically confusing for the hearers, they are, in fact, syntactically similar to other complement clause structures which are subject to weak Complex DP Island Constraint.

**Keywords:** Generative syntax; Turkish; wh-constructions; island constraints; argument & adjunct asymmetry

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