

Turkic Impersonal Passives

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Abstract. The current paper compares Sakha and Turkish through the lens of Distributed Morphology (Halle & Marantz 1993) and outlines the structural differences and similarities between their canonical and impersonal passive constructions. Turkish argument structure has attracted lots of attention in the literature due to the unexpected patterns it exhibits in the domain of passive and impersonal constructions, such as double passives and passives of unaccusatives, which pose a problem for the Unaccusative Hypothesis (Perlmutter 1978). To account for these structures, different previous approaches have argued that Turkish passive morphemes can in fact function as the overt realization of an argument in synthetic impersonal constructions (Dikmen et al. 2022, Legate et al. 2020). Building on this, I propose a new approach whereby these impersonal arguments are introduced by the general argument-introducing head *i** (Wood & Marantz 2017), which allows for a more flexible account of passives and impersonals in Turkic and possibly beyond.

Keywords: Turkic; passive; impersonals; Sakha; voice; Distributed Morphology

1. Introduction. Many languages around the globe make use of passive and impersonal constructions. A passive construction is an underlying transitive clause that forms a derived intransitive (Dixon & Aikhenvald 2000). The suppressed or ‘demoted’ subject may be optionally expressed in an oblique phrase and the object is ‘promoted’ to subject position. For example, in (1), the passive is related to the active in its meaning—the meaning is mostly identical—but the difference lies in word order and verb form.

- (1) John read a book.
A book was read (by John).

Impersonal constructions or impersonal passives on the other hand, are defined as having an implicit external argument (Wood & Marantz 2017). An impersonal passive usually has the same morphology as a canonical passive, but lacks an overt or specific subject, and rather encompasses a non-specific implied human agent (Wood & Marantz 2017). Impersonals may also be formed in other ways including the use of the auxiliary ‘to be’, but the current paper will focus on the former method, namely passive suffixation. These constructions appear in many different languages such as Icelandic (Siguðsson 2011), German (Primus 2011), Italian (Cinque 1988), and other Romance languages, as well as Turkic languages like Sakha (Tan & Köhler 2020) and Turkish (Legate et al. 2020; Özkarağöz 1986; Biktimir 1986, Özsoy 2009, among others).

Turkish impersonals have been a point of discussion among linguists from different frameworks due to the double presence of the passive morpheme on transitive verbs, where an already passive predicate is passivized again. Turkish also exhibits supposed passivization of unaccusative verbs. According to Perlmutter (1978) and the Unaccusative Hypothesis, unaccusative verbs cannot passivize due to the internal structure of these types of predicates,

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where the internal argument has already raised to subject position, and thus cannot raise again in the process of passivization. Likewise, passivization of an already passive predicate is deemed impossible due to a similar structural limitation, where the object of an active predicate has already moved to subject position in the passive and thus cannot do so again. Furthermore, the lack of an object in an already passive sentence or in an unaccusative predicate, limits the formation of a double passive since there is no object present to ‘promote’ to subject.

The current paper describes the differences between the canonical passive and the impersonal “passive” construction in Turkic languages, specifically in Turkish and Sakha. I adopt the approach from Legate et al. (2020) and Tan and Köhlert (2020) on Turkish and Sakha impersonals respectively, where the impersonal passive has a pronominal DP (an implicit argument) surfacing as a passive morpheme. Adopting this view predicts that double passives are impersonalized passive sentences, and not passivized passives, thus concluding that the Unaccusative Hypothesis (Perlmutter 1978) still holds. In addition to adopting the pronominal argument, I deviate from Legate et al. (2020) and Tan and Köhlert (2020) in that I adopt Wood and Marantz’s (2017) *i** model within the Distributed Morphology framework (Halle & Marantz 1993) to account for the canonical and impersonal passive in the two languages. Rather than licensing the pronominal argument with its own projection, this model allows for a more flexible syntactic structure whereby the covert argument can be licensed by an already existing projection, e.g., Voice. The flexibility of the model also allows for the analysis to be extended to impersonal and passive constructions in other Turkic languages, besides Turkish and Sakha, and possibly languages with impersonal constructions outside the Turkic family (e.g., Romance).

I will begin this paper by outlining the background and relevant data on Turkish and Sakha passives and impersonals. In section 3, I will outline my proposal in more detail by summarizing evidence for an impersonal pronominal argument that surfaces as a passive morpheme in Turkic impersonals following Legate et al. (2020) and Tan and Köhlert (2020) and describing the *i** model (Wood & Marantz 2017). Section 4 will include an analysis of impersonal and passive constructions in Sakha and Turkish. Finally, section 5 concludes the paper.

2. Background. Turkic passive and impersonal constructions differ in many parameters including which verbs they may form with (i.e., transitive, unergative, unaccusative), agreement patterns, case, *by*-phrase availability, what tense, and aspect these predicates may take, and more. In the following subsections, the parameters listed will be described for Turkish and Sakha passives and impersonals. But first, I will outline the (impersonal) passive morpheme for the two languages and describe their allophones.

2.1. MORPHO-PHONOLOGY. Turkic languages are agglutinating, meaning they have a very rich morphology, thus allowing for a lot of the syntax to be reflected in that morphology. Both the impersonal and the passive construction are formed by attaching the passive suffix to the stem. Furthermore, Turkic languages often have assimilatory processes in their phonology, such as vowel harmony, which are present in the two languages discussed below.

The Turkish passive morpheme, *-Il*, appears after stems which end in consonants, except those that end with [l]. The allomorph *-n* of the passive, which is identical to the reflexive (2a), appears after vowels and the allomorph *-In* appears after stems that end with [l]. In other words, the allomorph *-n* appears after vowel final stems, *-In* after laterals and *-Il* appears elsewhere (2) (Özkaragöz 1986; Göksel & Kerslake 2005). The passive suffix is an I-type suffix in Turkish vowel harmony meaning the I in *-Il* and *-In* is a [+high] vowel that assimilates to both [±front] and [±round] features of the preceding syllable in the stem (Göksel & Kerslake 2005).

(2) Turkish (Göksel & Kerslake 2005:76)

- | | | |
|---|--|--|
| a. yıka- n
wash-PASS/REFL
'be washed'/'wash oneself' | b. bil- in
know-PASS
'be known' | c. gör- ül
see-PASS
'be seen' |
|---|--|--|

The Sakha passive morpheme looks 'stacked' when compared to the monomorphemic passive morphemes of most other Turkic languages.

The suffix *-(n)Illn* follows the same vowel harmony principles as in Turkish, where the vowel retains its [+high] feature and assimilates in [±front] and [±round] features to the preceding syllable (Tan & Kühlert 2020). Insertion of the alveolar nasal happens after vowel-final stems. The form for the rest of the allomorph depends on what follows the suffix, rather than what precedes it. Thus, before non-alveolar consonants the suffix appears with a geminated lateral, as *-(n)IIll* (3b). Another allomorph is *-(n)Ill* (3c) which occurs before vowels. The *-(n)Illn* allomorph appears everywhere else, i.e., before alveolar stops and word-finally (3a).

(3) Sakha (Tan & Kühlert 2020:141, 142)

- | | | |
|--|--|---|
| a. tut- ulun -ø
catch-PASS-IMP
'be caught!' | b. min sie- nilli -bit-im
1SG eat-PASS-R.PST-1SG
'I was eaten.' | c. kiliep sie- nill -er
bread eat-PASS-AOR.3SG
'Bread is eaten.' |
|--|--|---|

Tan and Kühlert (2020) demonstrate that the Sakha morpheme after vowel final stems is indeed *-nIlln*, and not simply *-n* as has been argued previously in the literature. They argue that the *-n* suffix is rather an anticausative suffix (4b), not a passive one (4a), by showing the meaning differences in minimal pairs (4).

(4) Sakha (Tan & Kühlert 2020:142)

- | | |
|---|---|
| a. Sulus eh- ilin -n-e.
star explode-PASS-PST-3SG
'The star was exploded.' | b. Sulus eh- in -n-e.
star explode-ANTI-PST-3SG
'The star exploded.' |
|---|---|

Thus, the Sakha morpheme has a total of three allomorphs that are conditioned by the first phoneme on the following suffix, or a total of six allomorphs if the insertion of the nasal after vowel-final stems is considered.

2.2. TRANSITIVITY. The passive, reciprocal, and reflexive suffixes in Turkic have an intransitivizing function (Göksel & Kerslake 2005). See examples below from Turkish. The passive and reflexive suffixes intransitivize transitive verbs (5). Recall that the passive suffix has the same form as the reflexive after a vowel-final stem, resulting in an ambiguity in meaning for some constructions.

(5) Turkish (Göksel & Kerslake 2005:145)

- | | | |
|---|--|---|
| a. eğ- il
bend (s.t.)-PASS
'bend over' | b. yıka- n
wash(s.t.)-PASS/REFL
'be washed'/'have a bath' | c. sakla- n
hide (s.t.)-PASS/REFL
'hide' |
|---|--|---|

Turkish can attach the passive morpheme to both transitive and intransitive verbs alike. When attached to a transitive verb, the construction is a canonical passive, where the subject is

suppressed, and the underlying object becomes the subject of the sentence. The accusative case on the initial object becomes nominative in canonical passives (6).

- (6) Turkish (Kornfilt 1997:323)
- a. Kristof Kolomb Amerika-yı keşf-et-ti.
Christopher Columbus America-ACC discovery-do-PST.3
'Christopher Columbus discovered America.'
 - b. Amerika (Kristof Kolomb tarafından) keşf-ed-il-di.
America (Christopher Columbus by) discovery-do-PASS-PST.3
'America was discovered (by Christopher Columbus).'

Impersonal constructions may also be formed with transitive stems, but only when there are two passive morphemes present on the stem (7a). Thus, with the verb's reduced valency from the initial passivization, an impersonal is formed when a second passive suffix attaches to the verb stem. Otherwise, the impersonal is formed with intransitive stems in Turkish, including both unergative (7b) and unaccusative stems (7c).

- (7) Turkish (Legate et al. 2020:784, Özsoy 2009:263, Dikmen et al. 2022:2)
- a. Harp-te (asker-ler tarafından) vur-ul-un-ur.
war-LOC (solder-PL by) shoot-PASS-PASS-AOR.3
'In war, one is shot (by soldiers).'
 - b. Bütün gece (*çocuk-lar tarafından) dans-ed-il-di.
whole night (*child-PL by) dance-do-PASS-PST.3
'It was danced the whole night (*by the children).'
 - c. Bu çukur-a düş-ül-ür.
This hole-DAT fall-PASS-AOR.3
'One may fall to this hole.' Lit: "It is fallen to this hole."

In Sakha, the canonical passive can also only be formed with a transitive stem (8), while impersonal constructions can form with transitive, unergative, and unaccusative verbs (9) (Tan & Köhlert 2020).

- (8) Sakha (Tan & Köhlert 2020:142)
- a. Uol tynnyk-ter-i aljat-t-a.
boy window-PL-ACC break-PST-3SG
'A boy broke the windows.'
 - b. Tynnyk-ter (*uol-unan) aljat-ilin-n-ilar.
window-PL (*boy-INST) break-PASS-PST-3PL
'Windows were broken (*by the boy).'

- (9) Sakha (Tan & Köhlert 2020:146)
- massi:nan-nan ikki su:kka-nan ti:j-ill-er.
car-INST two day-INST arrive-PASS-AOR.3SG
'One can arrive [there] by a car in two days.'

The only difference between a canonical passive (10a) and the impersonal when constructed with the same transitive verb is the accusative marking present on the object in the impersonal construction (10b).

- (10) Sakha (Tan & Köhlert 2020:145)

- a. Sir ahat-ill-ar.
earth feed-PASS-AOR.3SG
'The earth is fed.'
- b. Sir-i ahat-ill-ar.
earth-ACC feed-PASS-AOR.3SG
'One feeds the earth.'

2.3. AGREEMENT. In personal passives, Turkish has person and number agreement on the verb with the subject as in (11), where the first-person plural marking on the verb agrees with the subject of the canonical passive sentence 'we'.

- (11) Turkish (Dikmen et al. 2022:1)
Biz (Korra tarafından) kovalan-dı-k.
1PL.NOM (Korra by) chase-PASS-PST-1PL
'We were chased (by Korra).'

The agreement on impersonal passives in Turkish is null, meaning that it is a third person singular agreement (7). This may be the default agreement for impersonals in Turkish, especially for those formed in the aorist, where the subject is human and non-specific (7a and 7c).

Sakha personal passives agree with the subject of the sentence in person and number with the suffixes attached on the verb (8b). The impersonal construction in Sakha, like the Turkish, only has third person singular agreement present on the verb. Whether or not this is the default agreement, it is interpreted as a third person singular animate agent (10b).

2.4. BY-PHRASE. As shown in (6), Turkish personal passives allow optional *by*-phrases to express the agent. Likewise, impersonal passives, or the 'double passives' in Turkish allow for an optional *by*-phrase as in (7a). However, impersonals formed with intransitive verbs are ungrammatical with a *by*-phrase present (7b).

Sakha does not have an equivalent of a *by*-phrase and does not have a way to express an agent. However, in examples like (12), instrumental case may be used. Note that it does not express an agent, but rather an instrument (Tan & Köhlert 2020). In canonical passives, the instrumental '*by*-phrase' is ungrammatical because the human agent is not an instrument (8b).

- (12) Sakha (Tan & Köhlert 2020:145)
Tynnyk mah-inan aljat-illi-bit
window tree-INS break-PASS-R.PST.3SG
'The window was broken using wood.'

2.5. SUMMARY. Tan and Köhlert (2020) draw a distinction between the active and passive impersonal. Specifically, the "active impersonal" is where the agent is impersonal, while the "passive impersonal" is defined as a construction with an impersonal theme theta role. Sakha only seems to exhibit the active type while Turkish exhibits both, with the "passive impersonal" emerging as a double passive of a transitive verb. The following tables provide an overview of the data that was described for Turkish (Table 1) and Sakha (Table 2) in the previous sections. Note that in Table 1, the second column describes the double passive impersonal construction as in (7a), compared to column two in Table 2, it describes a construction like (10b).

	Canonical (trans.)	Impersonal (passive trans.)	Impersonal (unerg.)	Impersonal (unacc.)
Agreement	Subject specific	3SG theme, specific agent	3SG	3SG
Case on (theme)	Accusative	n/a	n/a	n/a
By-phrase	Yes	Yes	No	No
Tense/Aspect	Episodic / existential	Existential only	Episodic / existential	Existential only
Animacy	Any	Human only theme, any agent	Human only	Human only

Table 1. Summary of Turkish impersonal and canonical passive properties.

	Canonical (trans.)	Impersonal (trans.)	Impersonal (unerg.)	Impersonal (unacc.)
Agreement	Subject specific	3SG	3SG	3SG
Case (on theme)	Accusative	Accusative	n/a	n/a
By-phrase	No	No	No	No
Tense/Aspect	Episodic / existential	Existential only	Existential only	Existential only
Animacy	Any	Human only	Human only	Human only

Table 2. Summary of Sakha impersonal and canonical passive properties.

3. Proposal. Turkish impersonal passives have been studied within different frameworks besides mainstream Minimalism, including Relational Grammar (Perlmutter 1978; Özkaragöz 1986; Biktimir 1986) and Optimality Theory (Kiparsky 2013). Others have attempted to explain the phenomenon using semantic restrictions such as animacy and telicity (Özsoy 2009; Primus 2011; S. Meral and H. Meral 2018) or have even argued that the formation of impersonal passives in Turkish is not a good test in discriminating between unergatives and unaccusatives (Nakipoğlu-Demiralp 2002). Most of these, however, problematically analyze these constructions by misclassifying passivized unaccusatives as unergatives.

The most recent minimalist approaches by Dikmen et al. (2022), Tan & Köhler (2020), and Legate et al. (2020) do not commit that mistake. Legate et al. (2020) describe the structure of Turkish impersonal passives formed with unaccusative verbs, unergative verbs, and more prominently with double passives. They state that “passivization is not a lexical or syntactic rule” (Legate et al. 2020, 772), and instead claim that the active and passive are built separately “using different lexical items” (Legate et al. 2020, 772). Their analysis thus states that the impersonal ‘passive’ is, in fact, an active construction with an impersonal pronoun. Note that this analysis accounts for ‘passives’ of passives in Turkish, Sanskrit and Lithuanian by rejecting the possibility of double passives in general, thus supporting Perlmutter’s (1978) Unaccusative Hypothesis. They make this possible by embedding an Impers (Impersonal) projection between Voice and Asp, further claiming that this is what accounts for the impossibility of double passive formation. The only function of Impers is to license the impersonal pronoun.

It seems that the passive morpheme in Turkish and Sakha impersonals, and most likely in impersonals of other Turkic languages, is pronominal. Both Legate et al. (2020) and Tan and Köhler (2020) assume the presence of an impersonal projection (ImpersP) that licenses this pronominal argument.

Assuming the presence of an impersonal pronominal argument in the impersonal construction in Turkic, the current analysis will outline the differences between the passive and impersonal constructions in Sakha and Turkish. However, I argue that having a projection to license an impersonal pronoun is unnecessary and propose that using *i** (Wood & Marantz 2017) is much more efficient and flexible in that it can account for the cross-linguistic variation of impersonal and canonical passives in Turkic languages. Furthermore, introducing this argument under an already existing projection like Voice explains the homophonous morphology it has with the canonical passive. That is, if both passive Voice and this impersonal pronoun are licensed by the same projection, they can surface as the same morpheme. If the pronominal argument is implicit and its phonological features are not specified, then the argument may take the phonological features of whatever head licenses it.

3.1. EVIDENCE FOR AN IMPERSONAL PRONOUN. There are eight pieces of evidence for the presence of a null pronoun in Turkish impersonals that Legate et al. (2020) outline: the (un)availability of a *by*-phrase, requirement of the [+human] feature, the ability of the impersonal pronoun to be controlled PRO, binding of the reciprocal *birbirleri*, licensing of depictives, the *ArAk* adverbial construction, quantificational variability effects, and sluicing. They allow for the impersonal pronoun to be generated in either thematic subject or object position, thus accounting for all instances of the impersonal passive, i.e., unaccusative, unergative, and passives of passives.

Tan and Köhler (2020) present the accusative retention on the impersonal as demonstrated in (10), as well as the necessity of third person singular agreement, as evidence for the presence of a covert DP in the structure. They further note that unaccusative constructions as in (9) cannot be passivized due to the lack of theme available for promotion, meaning that this must be an impersonal pronoun manifesting as a passive morpheme rather than passive voice. Just like many other impersonal constructions cross-linguistically, covert subjects in Sakha impersonals are required to have [+human] features. Additionally, they may take agent-oriented adverbs such as *sorujan* ‘intentionally’, while passives cannot. Furthermore, the impersonal pronominal argument can both control and be controlled PRO just like in Turkish impersonals (Tan & Köhler 2020). Tan and Köhler (2020) conclude that the impersonal in Sakha involves a silent human agent while the passive involves the demotion of an agent and the promotion of the theme argument. Thus, although in Sakha the two constructions are nearly identical (10), Tan and Köhler (2020) argue that they have underlyingly different syntactic structures.

Dikmen et al. (2022) also argue that the passive morpheme in Turkish is argumental. However, they assume that the passive is not a flavour of Voice but rather “involves existential quantification over an argument position” (Dikmen et al. 2022:5). Thus, the passive morpheme is an element on par with a DP in both canonical passives as well as in impersonal constructions and is merged in Spec, Voice as any other external argument. According to them, “the canonical passive is going to bind the argument position introduced by Voice” (Dikmen et al. 2022:6). This analysis assumes that the passive is the same in both canonical and impersonals, but as demonstrated above, the impersonal and passive are different constructions that happen to have the same morphology.

Although all the analyses outlined above differ in their structure of the impersonal, all of them argue for the presence of a pronominal argument.

3.2. WOOD AND MARANTZ (2017) *i**. The argument introducing head *i**, which is not specified for category, merges within the structure to form different projections including PP, VoiceP, little pP, low ApplP and high ApplP. Depending on where in the structure the head merges, it

will be associated with a different projection. For example, when i^* merges with vP, it becomes Voice. Five argument introducing heads formed with i^* include (Wood & Marantz 2017: 6, 9):

- Little p (figures): Bare i^* that merges with a PP.
- Voice (agents): Bare i^* that merges with a vP.
- Low appl (possessors): Bare i^* that merges with a DP.
- Big P (prepositions): root-adjoined i^* with selectional feature checked by complement.
- High appl (affectees): root-adjoined i^* with selectional feature not checked by complement.

Further, the argument introducing head i^* must select (S) for argument D (hence [S:D]). If Voice is an i^* that merges with vP and selects for category D ([S:D]), an impersonal pronoun can be selected as the agent DP in impersonals. Whenever there is an argument being introduced, i^* merges into the structure to introduce said argument. In this analysis, i^* introduces the external argument in Spec, Voice.

Wood and Marantz (2017) employ i^* for several different puzzles including Icelandic figure reflexives. In these figure reflexives which have no reflexive morphology, the only external argument is semantically interpreted as both the agent and the figure. According to the model, i^* will introduce both roles, but since it is saturated by only one argument, that argument will be interpreted as both the figure and the agent simultaneously. In my proposal, this flexibility allows for i^* to be interpreted as either agentive or non-agentive.

4. Analysis. In this section I implement the outlined proposal for Sakha and Turkish.

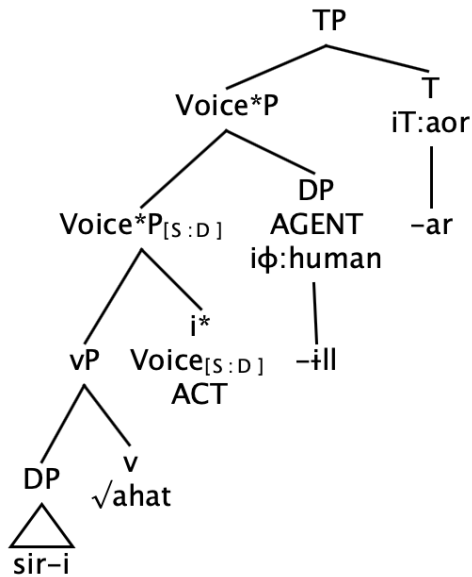
4.1. SAKHA. Recall that in Sakha, the passive (13a) and impersonal constructions (13b) are identical on the surface, except for the presence of an accusative morpheme on the object in the impersonal construction:

- (13) Sakha (Tan & Köhler 2020:142)
- | | | | |
|----|-----------------------|-------------------|--|
| a. | sir | ahat-ill-ar | |
| | earth | feed-PASS-AOR.3SG | |
| | ‘The earth is fed’ | | |
| b. | sir-i | ahat-ill-ar | |
| | earth-ACC | feed-PASS-AOR.3SG | |
| | ‘One feeds the earth’ | | |

If Sakha impersonal constructions in fact have an external argument, realized overtly by the passive morpheme, then we expect that the internal argument will bear accusative case, which happens to be marked in Sakha. We can use Wood and Marantz’s (2017) i^* approach to capture this structure. In this analysis, i^* merges with vP and so becomes VoiceP, as outlined above. Because the Voice head bears the feature [active], it introduces an external argument DP in its specifier. In Sakha, external argument DPs bear [+human] ϕ -features. Once this DP is merged in Spec, Voice¹, it satisfies the selection feature ([S:D]) on Voice. The internal argument receives accusative case from v. The tree below (14) shows the proposed structure:

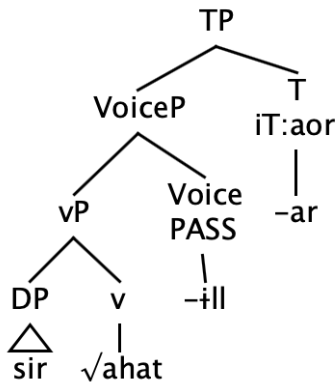
¹ i^* is not specified for category and when it combines with little v it ‘becomes’ Voice. Thus, when referring to Voice or when phrases are labeled with VoiceP, it is purely for convenience. The proposed structures could very well just have two little v heads as in Wood and Marantz (2017).

(14)



As for Sakha canonical passive, they look like canonical passives in English, with a [passive] Voice head and hence no merge of *i** to introduce an external argument (15). Because Voice cannot assign case when it is [passive], the internal argument gets [nominative] case from T instead and is thus interpreted as the subject. The proposed structure is illustrated below:

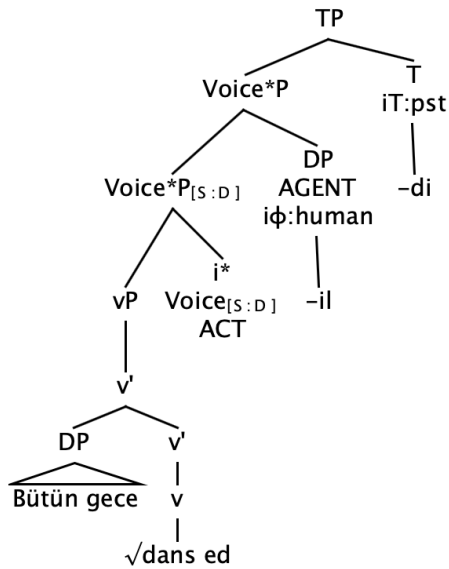
(15)



4.2. TURKISH. Turkish has a similar impersonal construction to Sakha when the passive morpheme combines with unergative verbs (16). The impersonal pronominal argument, i.e., the passive morpheme, is introduced by the argument introducing head *i** just like in Sakha. Recall that, unlike in Sakha, Turkish cannot form impersonal structures with only one passive morpheme when the verb is transitive. Thus, since this Turkish impersonal is formed with an unergative verb, no case is assigned as there is no object. The proposed structure is demonstrated below (17). The tree is like that of (14) in Sakha, where Voice is active, and an external argument is introduced in Spec. The external argument is specified for [+human].

- (16) Bütün gece dans ed-il-di
 whole night dance-PASS-PAST.3
 'It was danced the whole night.'

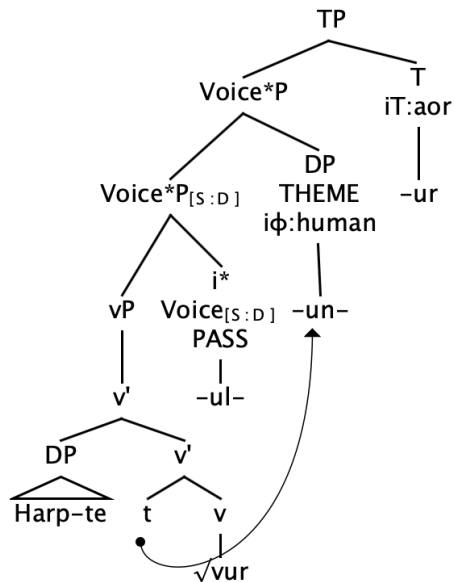
(17)



The case for double passives in Turkish (18) implements this impersonal pronominal argument. Legate et al. (2020) suggest that the argument is base generated in the complement position and Voice is passive. Adopting this view, I propose the structure in (19), where the argument introducing head is present although the Voice is still passive. Since it selects for D, but no argument is present in Spec, the syntax searches for another available argument to select for it. The only available argument is the impersonal pronominal argument in the complement of v; thus, the argument raises to fill the subject position but retains its theme theta role.

- (18) harp-te vur-**ul-un**-ur
war-LOC shoot-PASS-PASS-AOR.3
'In war, one is shot.'

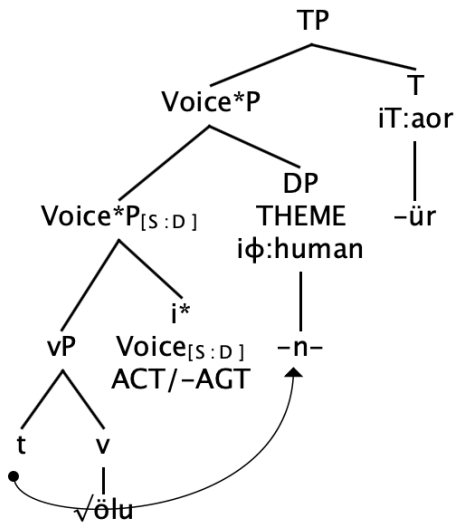
(19)



Lastly, in the case of Turkish impersonals of unaccusatives (20), the pronoun is base generated as the theme of the predicate just like in impersonals of passives described above. The pronoun raises as *i** is merged in the structure in (21).

- (20) Bu soğuk-ta ölü-n-ür
 this cold-LOC die-PASS-AOR.3
 ‘It is died of this cold.’

(21)



5. Conclusion. In this paper, we have seen that passive and impersonal constructions in Turkic languages show typologically unexpected empirical properties, such as double passives and passivization of unaccusatives. To account for these, previous approaches have proposed that passive morphemes can realize impersonal arguments in Turkic languages, drawing mostly on data from Turkish and Sakha. But these approaches have their limits. Indeed, Legate et al. (2020) must introduce a new projection to license this pronoun that has no other function. Furthermore, do not explain the homophony between the passive morpheme and the covert pronoun. I have tried to show that a more unified account based on Wood and Marantz’s (2017) *i** may be superior. Perhaps these impersonal arguments are introduced by this general argument-introducing head, which is also responsible for licensing other arguments. An interesting outstanding question is whether and to what extent this approach can be extended to other languages featuring such constructions. If other Turkic languages or even Romance languages feature the same implicit argument in their impersonal passives, as has been argued previously (Cinque 1988; MacDonald 2017), perhaps *i** is able to account for and explain these constructions, thus allowing for variation whilst unifying the analysis for impersonal passives cross-linguistically.

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