

**Turkish Passive Impersonals**  
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Turkish has been claimed to exhibit passives of passives, (1), (Keenan and Timberlake 1985, Özkaragöz 1986, Baker et al. 1989, Bruening 2013, Kiparsky 2013, Murphy 2014, i.a.). This has motivated a generalized demotion analysis of the passive, whereby an operation or functional head suppresses the highest open argument, be it an initiator or a theme (Bruening 2013, Kiparsky 2013, Murphy 2014, i.a.).

- (1) Harp-te vur-ul-un-ur.  
war-LOC shoot-PASS-PASS-AOR

‘One is shot (by one) in the war.’ (Özkaragöz 1986, 77)

In this paper we demonstrate that (1) is the combination of two distinct constructions with identical morphology: (i) a passive, whereby the initiator  $\theta$ -role is introduced by Voice<sup>0</sup>, and either is realized in a ‘by’ phrase or undergoes existential closure applying directly to Voice<sup>0</sup>; and (ii) an impersonal, whereby the initiator is syntactically projected as a null impersonal pronoun.

**Passive** The Turkish passive applies to transitive verbs, (2), promotes an ACC object to NOM, allows a ‘by’ phrase, and allows non-human initiators, (3). It is ungrammatical if the object is pseudo-incorporated, (4), or oblique, (5), or if the verb is unergative, (6), or unaccusative, (7).

- (2) Sivrisinek adam-ı ısır-dı (3) Adam (sivrisinek tarafından) ısır-il-dı  
mosquito.NOM man-ACC bite-PST man.NOM (mosquito by) bite-PASS-PST  
‘The mosquito bit the man.’ ‘The man was bitten by the mosquito.’
- (4) \* Ali tarafından hızlı kitap oku-n-du. (6) \* Çocuk-lar tarafından dans ed-il-di.  
Ali by quick book read-PASS-PST child-PL by dance do-PASS-PST  
‘Book-reading was done quickly by Ali.’ ‘It was danced the whole night by the children.’
- (5) \* Top-a çocuk tarafından vur-ul-du. (7) \* Kaza-da adam tarafından öl-ün-dü.  
ball-DAT child by kick-PASS-PST accident-LOC man by die-PASS-PST  
‘The ball was kicked by the child.’ ‘It was died by the man in the accident.’

However, these become grammatical if the ‘by’-phrase is removed. Such constructions have been considered impersonal passives, that is passives in which the initiator is demoted, but there is no promotion to the grammatical subject position (Özkaragöz 1986, Nakipoğlu-Demiralp 2001, Öztürk 2005, Özsoy 2009, Kiparsky 2013). We demonstrate that these are impersonals with a null impersonal pronoun.

**Passive vs Impersonal** We provide six arguments that the impersonal initiator is syntactically projected as a null impersonal pronoun, whereas the passive initiator is unprojected. (i) As seen in (4)-(7), a ‘by’-phrase is impossible in the impersonal, unlike in the passive, (3). (ii) An embedded impersonal initiator can be controlled PRO, (8), but a passive initiator cannot, (9). (iii) A human interpretation is obligatory, (10), like impersonals (e.g. Italian *si*, German *Man*, English *one*), but unlike the passive (3). (iv) The impersonal initiator can bind a reciprocal in a PP, (11), the passive initiator cannot, (12).

- (8) [yarın ayrıl-in-mak] iste-n-di (9) \* Hasan [kitap hızlı oku-n-mak] iste-di.  
[tomorrow leave-PASS-INF] want-PASS-PST Hasan [book quick read-PASS-INF] want-PST  
‘One wanted to leave tomorrow’ ‘Hasan wanted to read the book quickly.’
- (10) \* Çöl-ler-de hısla-n-ıyor. (11) Bayram-lar-da birbirleri için pilav pişir-il-ir.  
desert-PL-LOC hiss-PASS-PROG holiday-PL-LOC each.other for pilaf cook-PASS-AOR  
‘It is hissed in the deserts.’ ‘During holidays, people cook pilaf for each other.’
- (12) \* Pilav bayram-da birbirleri için pişir-il-di.  
pilaf holiday-LOC each.other for cook-PASS-PST  
‘During the holiday, pilaf was cooked for each other.’

(v) The subject of a dependent simultaneous *-ArAk* clause (Biktimir 1986, Knecht 1985) is licensed by the impersonal initiator, (13), but not by the passive initiator, (14).

- (13) [Sakız çiğne-yerek] hoca-yla konuş-ul-maz.  
gum chew-ArAk teacher-with speak-PASS-NEG.AOR  
'One does not speak with the teacher while chewing gum.' (Biktimir 1986, 64)
- (14) \* [Sakız çiğne-yerek] hoca öğrenci tarafından çağır-ıl-maz.  
gum chew-ArAk teacher student by call-PASS-NEG.AOR  
'The teacher is not called by a student while (student is) chewing gum.'
- (vi) The impersonal initiator can license a depictive, (15), but the passive initiator cannot, (16).

- (15) Sarhoş koş-ul-du. (16) \* Mektup Ahmet tarafından sarhoş yaz-ıl-dı.  
drunk run-PASS-PST letter Ahmet by drunk write-PASS-PST  
'It was run drunk.' 'The letter was written by Ahmet drunk.'

**Passive of Impersonal** Returning to (1), we find the theme is an impersonal pronoun: it is obligatorily human, (17), and cannot appear in a 'by'-phrase (19). In contrast, the initiator has been demoted through the passive: it can be non-human, (18), and can appear in a 'by'-phrase, (18), (19).

- (17) # Burada güd-ül-ün-ür. (18) Orman-da (yılan-lar tarafından) sok-ul-un-ur.  
here herd-PASS-PASS-AOR forest-LOC snake-PL by bite-PASS-PASS-AOR  
'Here one is herded.' 'In the forest, one is bitten (by the snakes).'
- (19) Harp-te askerler tarafından vur-ul-un-ur.  
war-LOC soldiers by shoot-PASS-PASS-AOR  
NOT: theme 'by'-phrase 'In war, soldiers are shot by one'  
YES: initiator 'by'-phrase 'In war, one is shot by soldiers.'

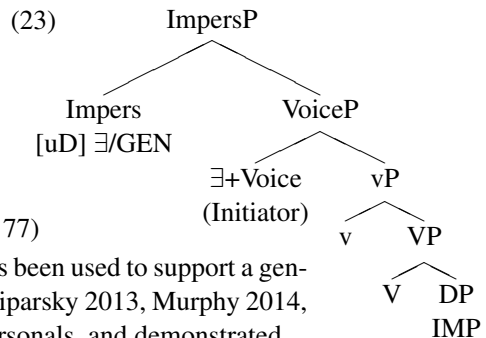
As an impersonal pronoun, the theme can bind a reciprocal, license a depictive, and be controlled PRO:

- (20) Harp-te IMP [PRO<sub>IMP</sub> kimse tarafından vur-ul-un-mak] iste-n-mez  
war-LOC [ anyone by shoot-PASS-PASS-INF] want-PASS-NEG.AOR  
'In the war, it is not wanted to be shot by anyone.'

**Morphology** We analyse the impersonal morphology as heading a functional projection dominating VoiceP; ImpersP licenses the null impersonal morpheme, and hosts the generic/existential quantification. A [uD] feature on Impers<sup>0</sup> attracts the highest argument (as in Landau 2015 on controlled PRO), therefore the impersonal pronoun cannot be the theme of an active transitive, (21). Thus, (23) is the structure of (1) repeated as (22), (prior to verb movement).

- (21) \* Harp-te düşman hızlı vur-ul-ur.  
war-LOC enemy quickly shoot-PASS-AOR  
'In war, the enemy shoots one quickly.'

- (22) Harp-te vur-ul-un-ur.  
war-LOC shoot-PASS-PASS-AOR  
'One is shot (by one) in the war.' (Özkaragöz 1986, 77)



**Conclusion** The Turkish prima facie passive of a passive, has been used to support a generalized demotion analysis of the passive (Bruening 2013, Kiparsky 2013, Murphy 2014, i.a.). We carefully distinguished Turkish passives from impersonals, and demonstrated that the “passive of a passive” is a passive of an impersonal, with a demoted initiator and impersonal pronominal theme. The import of Turkish is thereby reversed: it strongly supports a characterization of the passive whereby the passive may only apply to verbs with a thematic subject (Perlmutter and Postal 1984). The impersonal is not so restricted, applying also to passives and unaccusatives. We provided an analysis of both the passive and the impersonal that correctly predicts these patterns.

**Selected references:** Bruening, B. 2013. By-phrases in passives and nominals. *Syntax*. Kiparsky, P. 2013. Towards a null theory of the passive. *Lingua*. Murphy, A. 2014. Stacked passives in Turkish. In *Topics at InfL*, Assmann et al (eds). Linguistische Arbeits Berichte.