

## Negative sensitive elements in Turkish: negative polarity or negative concord?

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Turkish has a number of negative sensitive elements like *kimse* / *hiçkimse* 'no one / anyone', *hiçbir şey* 'nothing / anything', *hiç* 'never' as well as *katiyyen* 'in any way' and *asla* 'never'. Since these elements require the presence of sentential negation or the negative suffix *-sIz* 'without', they were generally treated as negative polarity items (NPIs) in previous work (Aygen 1998; Keleşir 2001, 2003). On the other hand, it has been shown in more recent work that some of these elements are behaving more like negative concord items (NCIs) in the language (Şener 2007; Kamali 2017). However, none of these studies has provided an analysis in which the distributional, syntactic and semantic characteristics of these elements have been thoroughly analyzed. In this work, I investigate these elements by utilizing a set of diagnostic tests proposed in prior work. The findings show that these elements pair with NCIs rather than NPIs in Turkish. Also, the behavior of NCIs displays close similarities to that of universal quantifiers in terms of locality and some other criteria.

Vallduví (1994) and, in a recent paper, Giannakidou (2000) argue that certain properties of NCIs are different from that of NPIs cross-linguistically in the sense that the former:

- (1) a. are able to occur in isolation as fragment answers,  
b. can be modified by such elements as *almost* and *absolutely*,  
c. do not need to be c-commanded by a licenser (i.e. can occur in the subject position),  
d. cannot appear in non-negative contexts,  
e. cannot be long-distance bound.

The question that should be addressed here is how negative sensitive elements in Turkish behave with respect to these criteria. Consider the following data in (2)-(6).

(2) A: Kim gel-di?  
who came

B: Hiçkimse.  
No one (√ fragment answers)

(3) Neredeyse hiçkimse uyu-ma-di.  
almost no one sleep-NEG-PAST (√ modifiability)  
'Almost no one slept.'

(4) Hiçkimse gel-me-di.  
no one come-NEG-PAST  
'No one came.' (√ pre-negative)

(5) \* Hiçkimse var mı?  
no one exist Q  
'Is there no one?' (√ no non-negative context)

(6) \* Ahmet [ hiçkimse-nin gel-diğ-i-ni] söyle-me-di.  
Ahmet no one-GEN come-NMN-POSS-ACC tell-NEG-PAST  
'Ahmet didn't tell that anyone came.' (√ clause-boundedness)

Based on these five diagnostic tests, the above data show that the negative element *hiçkimse* 'no one' displays all the characteristics of a typical NCI observed across languages. In fact, this is true of other negative sensitive elements in Turkish, as shown in Table 1.

Table 1: The syntactic and semantic distribution of negative sensitive elements in Turkish.

| Negative element  | Diagnostic 1 (fragment answer) | Diagnostic 2 (modifiability) | Diagnostic 3 (pre-negative) | Diagnostic 4 (non-negative) | Diagnostic 5 (clause-boundedness) |
|-------------------|--------------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| <i>Hiçkimse</i>   | √                              | √                            | √                           | *                           | *                                 |
| <i>Kimse</i>      | √                              | √                            | √                           | √                           | *                                 |
| <i>Hiçbir şey</i> | √                              | √                            | √                           | *                           | *                                 |
| <i>Hiç</i>        | √                              | √                            | √                           | √                           | *                                 |
| <i>Asla</i>       | √                              | √                            | √                           | *                           | *                                 |
| <i>Katiyyen</i>   | √                              | √                            | √                           | *                           | *                                 |
| <i>Sakin</i>      | √                              | √                            | √                           | *                           | *                                 |

