There is no Causative in Anticausative: Evidence from Turkish

In this study, I present morphological evidence from Turkish that the so-called 'anticausative' (Haspelmath 1993) is not derived from the corresponding causative verb. I propose instead that it is derived via the merger of a non-active (NACT) voice head (Embick 1998, 2004) with a non-causative stem. Working within the framework of Distributed Morphology (Halle & Marantz 1993), I show that this structure, which I identify as middle voice, underlies not only anticausative alternations, but equipollent alternations in Turkish as well. I further show that the merger of non-active voice with a causative stem yields a passive, and I argue that it is precisely the presence versus the absence of a cause operator that distinguishes middles from passives.

The Turkish anticausative morpheme, which I claim to be the exponent of non-active voice, has the predictable forms *-Il*, *-In*, and *-n* (where 'I' represents an underspecified high vowel with various realizations determined by vowel harmony).

(1) a. *-Il* after most consonants:

kır-	*kır-ıl-*
'break (tr.)'	'break (int.)'

b. *-In* after /l/:

böl-	*böl-ün-*
'divide (tr.)'	'divide (int.)'

c. *-n* after a vowel:

kapa-	*kapa-n-*
'close (tr.)'	'close (int.)'

As such, it is syncretic with the passive morpheme.

(2)

a.	*kır-*	*kır-ıl-*
	'break (tr.)'	'be broken'
b.	*böl-*	*böl-ün-*
	'divide (tr.)'	'be divided'
c.	*yıka-*	*yıka-n-*
	'wash'	'be washed'

However, there is an important distributional difference that distinguishes the interpretations of this morpheme. Whenever the corresponding transitive verb has an overt causative morpheme, the inchoative and the passive are systematically distinguished by whether or not they embed the causative. When the causative is absent, non-active voice yields an inchoative, and when the causative is present, it yields a passive.

(3)

	causative	inchoative	passive
a.	*dağ-ıt-*	*dağ-ıl-*	*dağ-ıt-ıl-*
	scatter-CAUS-	scatter-NACT	scatter-CAUS-NACT
	'scatter (tr.)'	'scatter (int.)'	'be scattered'
b.	*kurt-ar-*	*kurt-ul-*	*kurt-ar-ıl-*
	rescue-CAUS-	rescue-NACT-	rescue-CAUS-NACT-
	'rescue (tr.)'	'get free (int.)'	'be rescued'
c.	*tüke-t-*	*tüke-n-*	*tüke-t-il-*
	exhuast-CAUS-	exhaust-NACT-	exhaust-CAUS-NACT-
	'use up'	'run out'	'be used up'

d.	*ısla-t-*	*ısla-n-*	*ısla-t-ıl-*
	wet-CAUS-	wet-NACT-	wet-CAUS-NACT-
	'wet (tr.)'	'become wet'	'be wetted'

The most straightforward interpretation of these facts is that the passive is derived from the causative, but that the inchoative/anticausative is not. I propose that when the non-active voice head composes with a cause operator, the result is passive, and when it does not, the result is middle.

The findings herein are at odds with a variety of accounts that all derive the anticausative from a causative base (Reinhart 2002, Horvath & Siloni 2011a,b; Chierchia 2004; Alexiadou et al. 2006; Koontz-Garboden 2009), providing support instead for the claim of Harley (2008) that verb alternations are derived independently from one another via causative and inchoative morphemes. However, the present work concludes that the inchoative morpheme is a voice projection, and not a type of little-v as claimed in Harley (2008).

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