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# The Properties of Null Objects in Turkish<sup>1</sup>

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**Abstract:** *This study investigates whether one needs to posit null objects in contexts where transitive verbs are used without phonetically overt arguments. The answer appears to be positive when some tests are taken into consideration. As a next step, the types of null objects in Turkish sentence and discourse level grammar are discussed with some examples. It is observed that null objects do not form a uniform category and that there are at least three categories of null objects in Turkish. A discussion of English null objects is also included and some comparisons between the two languages are provided.*

**Key words:** *transitive verbs, existence and classification of null objects, sentence and discourse level grammar.*

**Öz:** *Bu çalışmada Türkçe'deki geçişli eylemlerin telaffuz edilmeyen nesnelere bulunduğu durumlarda bu eylemleri geçişsiz olarak mı yoksa boş nesne alan eylemler olarak mı tanımlamamız gerektiği sorusuna yanıt aranmış, ve boş nesnenin var olması gerektiği savunulmuştur. Daha sonra boş nesnelerin özellikleri incelenmiş ve bunların Türkçe'de bir tek grup oluşturmadıkları, üç ayrı kategoride sınıflandırılmaları gerektiği saptanmıştır. İngilizce'deki boş nesnelere de tartışmaya eklenmiş ve gereken yerlerde her iki dildeki boş nesnelerin karşılaştırması yapılmıştır. Bu çalışma dilbilim ve Türkçe dilbilgisi ile karşılaştırmalı dilbilim alanlarına katkıda bulunarak boş nesnelere daha iyi anlamamızı sağlayacaktır.*

**Anahtar sözcükler:** *Geçişli eylemler, boş nesnelerin gerçekliği ve sınıflandırılması, tümce ve metin düzeyi dilbilgisi.*

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<sup>1</sup> A previous version of this paper was presented at the *Ninth International Conference on Turkish Linguistics*, Oxford University 12-14 August 1998. It has benefited a lot from the comments of the audience at the conference and from the feedback given by three anonymous referees who reviewed this paper. Remaining mistakes are my own.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Turkish is a pro-drop language and the content of subject *pro* is identified through person and number agreement suffixes on the verb. Turkish also allows null objects whose content is not thus locally identifiable through object verb agreement or clitics.

Null arguments constitute a rich resource of investigation for natural languages and should not be neglected as a topic of research. Null objects in Turkish are apparently of both sentence and discourse level linguistic concern. Like sentence level grammars, discourse information is crucial for a complete linguistic theory since it is also a level of linguistic competence. Therefore, understanding the properties of null objects will further our knowledge of Turkish grammar and discourse rules and will shed light on a part of grammatical and discourse competence.

Some other languages also allow null objects. Among these are discourse-oriented or topic prominent languages such as Japanese and Chinese, as well as in non-topic namely, subject prominent European languages, such as French (Authier 1992), Italian (Rizzi 1986), and even English in certain contexts as we shall show below.

In this paper, a classification of various types of null objects in Turkish will be presented. This study does not focus on a theoretical line of inquiry, instead a classification of null objects will be made by comparing Turkish and English objects. Such a classification is necessary for our understanding of Turkish grammar and it will further our understanding of types of null objects encountered in the languages of the world.

The rest of this paper is organized as follows: In Section 2, evidence for null objects will be given. In 3, null objects in English and Turkish will be compared in some detail. Sections 4 and 5 are dedicated to the discussion of the types of null objects especially those in Turkish. Finally, the conclusions are given in Section 6.

## 2. EVIDENCE FOR NULL OBJECTS IN TURKISH

In this section, the following question is raised: Are These phonetically void elements in Turkish indeed null objects or are there no empty categories at all; namely, are they instances of true intransitive alternations of transitive verbs? In our search for the answer, examples of English null objects will also be given when necessary.

A null object is understood when an empty category is assigned a theta role by the verb but the corresponding position is not overt. The term null object is used for these empty categories whether they are pronouns or variables<sup>2</sup> (see endnote 2).

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<sup>2</sup> According to Chomsky (1982), both overt and empty categories are divided into various types. Overt categories are anaphors such as *himself*, *each other*; pronouns such *he*, *she*, etc., R-expressions as *John*, etc. Lexical anaphors, pronouns and R-expressions are subject to Principles A, B, and C of Binding Theory, respectively. Empty categories are NP trace, PRO, *pro*, and variables. An NP-trace is an empty category left behind after a movement to an A(argument) position, i.e. a position to which a grammatical function is assigned. PRO is an ungoverned position, it is the subject of a non-finite clause, and it has no overt counterpart. The empty pronominal *pro* is the phonologically unrealized counterpart of overt pronouns, as in Turkish '*pro* çok kitap okuyor. ([He] reads a lot of books)'. Therefore, *pro* is also subject to Principle B. Finally, variables are traces of movement to an A-bar position. A null object cannot be an NP trace since it is not bound. It cannot be a PRO, either. This is because it is not the subject of a non-finite clause, besides null objects are governed by the verb and PRO cannot be governed. Therefore, there are two other categories left. Null objects can either be instances of *pro* or variables. There is another option as discussed by Lasnik and Stowell (1991); a null non-variable R-expression, corresponding to a null version of an epithet. A discussion of this distinction, however, is beyond the scope of this paper and it is left for the topic of a future study. For a preliminary analysis of the syntactic properties of null objects in Turkish the reader is referred to Turan (1990).

Unlike English, Turkish does not usually allow an unexpressed object at discourse-initial position except for a few cases that will be shown below. As discussed by Zwicky (1987), Fillmore (1986), Levin (1989) Cote (1992, 1994), Massam & Roberge (1989), among others, there is a category of verbs in English that optionally select an object argument. On the other hand, except for a very few number of verbs that we shall discuss later, and as suggested by Allerton (1975), Turkish prohibits object deletion even when the content of the object is understood from the selectional information specified in a verb's entry. For example, the verb *eat* imposes a selectional restriction on its object and the object should denote something [+EDIBLE]. Consider (1) and (2), where *θ* stands for a null object

1. a. Hasta olduğum zaman yemek /*θ*/ yiyemedim.  
Sick be.NOM.1.PER.SING time food eat.ABIL.NEG.PAST.1.PER.SING<sup>3</sup>
- b. When I was sick, I couldn't eat.
2. A. a. Bugün ne yaptın?  
Today what do.PAST.2.PER. SING.
- b. What did you do today?
- B. a. Bir şeyler /*θ*/ pişirdim.  
One thing.PLU cook.PAST.2PERS.SING.
- b. I cooked.

While English allows unexpressed objects with the verbs *eat* and *cook* in (1) and (2), Turkish counterparts are illicit and an overt object, albeit dummy or cognate, must be used.

Another piece of evidence for the existence of zero objects comes from the so-called object cancellation. According to Thomas (1979), an object can be cancelled so long as the verb does not strictly subcategorize for the object, as in (3):

3. A: Have you been reading Alice in Wonderland ?
- B: I've been reading, but not Alice in Wonderland. (Thomas 1979: 56)

In (3), the object can be cancelled because the verb *read* can be used intransitively, hence does not obligatorily require an object.

Likewise, an adjunct, which is not in the subcategorization frame of a verb, can be cancelled both in English and Turkish:

4. A: Ali geçen hafta Florida'da mı dinleniyordu?  
Ali last week Florida.LOC QUES rest.PROG.PAST  
Was Ali resting in Florida last week?
- B: Dinleniyordu, ama Florida'da değil.  
rest.PROG.PAST. but Florida.LOC not  
(He) was resting, but not in Florida.

<sup>3</sup> Key for the glosses: ABIL: Ability, ABL. Ablative, ACC. Accusative, AOR. Aorist, CAUS. Causative, CONJ. Conjunction morpheme, DAT. Dative, FUT. Future, GEN. Genitive, HEARSAY: The aspectual marker *-miş*, which shows that speakers' lack of commitment to the truth of the proposition, LOC. Locative, NOM. Nominalizer, NEG. Negation, QUES. Question particle, PASS. Passive, PAST. Past tense, PLU. Plural, POSS. Possessive, PRES. Present, PROG. Progressive, REL. Relative clause marker, SING. Singular. The numbers show person features. Gender does not exist in Turkish.

On the other hand, an absolute transitive verb does not allow its object to be cancelled, as in (5):

5. A: Have you been watching television?  
B: # I've been watching, but not the television. (Thomas 1979: 57)

In Turkish, objects of transitive verbs cannot be cancelled, as in (6) and (7):

6. A: Shakespeare'i mi okuyordun?  
Shakespeare.ACC. QUES. read.PROG.PAST.2.PER.SING.  
Were you reading Shakespeare?  
B: # Okuyordum, ama Shakespeare'i değil.  
Read.PROG.PAST.1.PER.SING. but Shakespeare.ACC. not.  
I was reading, but not Shakespeare.

7. A: Elmayı mı yedin?  
Apple.ACC. QUES. Eat.PAST. 2.PER.SING.  
Have you eaten the apple?  
B: #Yedim, ama elmayı değil.  
Eat.PAST.1.PER.SING. but apple. ACC. not  
I have eaten, but not the apple.

Finally, a fourth piece of evidence for the existence of null objects comes from intra-sentential reference. An object of a transitive verb that is co-indexed with another argument intra-sententially cannot be unexpressed, as shown in Kornfilt (1984) and Erguvanlı (1986). Examples are given in (8), (9), and (10). The NPs in italics are assumed to be co-indexed.

8. *Ahmet* 'in işe aldığı kızlar  
Ahmet.GEN. work.DAT. take.NOM.POSS. girl.PLU.  
*onu* / \*0 severler (Erguvanlı 1986: 218)  
he.ACC. like.AOR.3.PER.PLU.  
The girls that *Ahmet* hired like *him* very much.
9. *Hocamız*, öğrencilerinin *onu* / \*0  
Teacher.POSS.1.PER.PLU. student.PLU.3.PER.SING.POSS. she.ACC.  
çok beğendiklerini iddia etti. (Kornfilt 1984:38)  
very like.NOM.3.PER.PLU.ACC. claim make.PAST.  
Our teacher claimed that her students liked her a lot.
10. *Hocamıza* gelince,  
Teacher.POSS.1.PER.PLU.DAT. come.WHEN  
Ahmet *onu* / \*0 çok beğenir. (Kornfilt 1984:38)  
Ahmet she.ACC. very like.AOR.  
As far as our teacher is concerned, Ahmet likes her very much.

However, all the objects in the examples discussed so far can be null as long as there is an antecedent in the previous discourse, as in (11) through (14):

11. A: *Portakal* yiyiyor musun?  
orange eat.PROG.QUES.2.PER.SING.  
Do you eat orange(s)?
- B: *Hasta olduğum zaman 0* yiyemedim.  
Sick be.NOM.1.PER.SING. when eat.ABIL.NEG. PAST.1PER.SING.  
I couldn't eat (any) when I was sick.
12. A: *Evde kek var mı?*  
house.LOC. cake exist QUES.  
Is there any cake at home?
- B: *Bugün 0* pişirdim.  
today bake.PAST.1.PER.SING.  
I baked (some) today.
13. A: *Ahmet'i kim sever?*  
Ahmet.ACC. who love.AOR..  
Who loves *Ahmet*?
- B: *İşe aldığı kızlar 0* sever.  
job.DAT take.REL. girl.PLU. like.PRES.  
The girls who (he) hired like (him)
14. A: *Hocanızı beğenir misiniz?*  
teacher.POSS.2.PER.PLU like.AOR. QUES.2.PER.PLU.  
Do you like your *teacher*?
- B: *Evet, 0 / onu çok beğeniriz.*  
yes she.ACC. very like.AOR.1.PER.PLU  
Yes, we like *her* a lot.

The intra-sentential anaphoric relations test for null objects is not always reliable. This is because as we shall see below there are instances of null objects that refer to other arguments within the same sentence. However, this test shows that these true transitive verbs do not have intransitive alternations.

### 3. NULL OBJECTS IN ENGLISH AND TURKISH

The differences between English and Turkish null objects are the following:

- (i) Sadock (1974) argues that English allows a null object only if the subject is also missing as in the instructions given in (15) and (16):

15. \*Persons with high fever should not use. (Sadock 1974: 601)  
16. Do not take internally. (Sadock 1974:602)

In addition, null objects in English are constrained to certain genres as recipe contexts or instructions, as well as some dialects like Yiddish English. In Turkish, however, the use of null objects is not necessarily restricted to certain discourse genres or dialects. (ii)

In English, null objects are a lexical idiosyncratic property of verbs. There is a group of verbs in English like *eat, drink, bake, cook, clean, etc.*, which can be used without an overt object discourse-initially as we saw in examples (1) and (2). On the other hand, Salient Object Alternation verbs like *phone, visit, ask, notice* must have a salient discourse antecedent in the prior discourse. Examples are given in (17) through (22):

17. I've just eaten.
18. A: Did Cheetah eat all the bananas?  
B: Yes, she ate them / \*0. (Cote 1992:3)
19. A: *Muzları,* Çita mı yedi?  
Banana.PLU.ACC. Cheetah QUES. Eat.PAST  
B: Evet, o 0 yedi.  
Yes, she eat.PAST
20. Did you bake today? (Cote 1992:3)
21. a. Martha wrote to Jane.  
b. Bill called. (Cote 1992:5)
22. a. Martha *Jane'e* mektup yazdı.  
Martha Jane.ACC. letter write.PAST  
b. Bill de 0 aradı.  
Bill too call.PAST.

Example (17) shows that the verb *eat* can be used with a null object at discourse-initial position. However, when it is used with an overt object as in (18), the object in the following adjacent utterance cannot be null. Likewise, the verb *bake* can also be used with a null object initially. On the other hand, *call* in (21) has a salient object in the preceding discourse (i.e. *Jane*), otherwise, the object can be situationally evoked. For example, a speaker who enters the room can ask a question as *has anyone called?*, where the null object is understood as a situationally evoked entity; namely, the speaker herself.

Null objects in Turkish, unlike those in English, do not seem to be a lexical property of verbs. Every transitive verb in Turkish can have a null object provided that there is a salient antecedent, either textually or situationally evoked.

However, there are a few exceptions in Turkish and some verbs like *düşünmek* 'to think' can be used both transitively and intransitively, as seen in (23) and (24):

23. A: İşini mi düşünüyorsun?  
 job.2.PER.POSS.ACC QUES. think.2.PERS.PROG.  
 Are you thinking about your job?
- B: Düşünüyorum, ama işimi değil.  
 Think.PROG.1.PER.SING. but job.1.PER.SING.POSS.ACC. not  
 I'm thinking, but not my job. (object can be cancelled)
24. A: Ne yapıyorsun?  
 What do.PROG.2.PER.SING.  
 What are you doing?
- B: Düşünüyorum. (No object at discourse-initial position)  
 Think.PROG.1.PER.SING.  
 I'm thinking.

Furthermore, there are some transitive verbs that can be used intransitively. These verbs undergo semantic specialization and change their meaning or they impose restrictions on their objects. For example, *okumak* in (25b) is not understood as 'to read' any more but it has a new meaning, namely 'to study' and as it becomes an intransitive verb *mektep* 'school' cannot be its direct object:

25. a. Bir zaman mektebe de giderdi,  
 One time school.DAT too go.PRES.PAST.  
 Once upon a time, (he) also went to school
- b. ne de güzel okuyordu  
 what too well read. PROG.PAST  
 How well (he) was studying. (Esendal, 1984:15)

Another transitive verb that can be used without a salient antecedent is *içmek* 'to drink'. This usage, however, restricts the type of its understood object only as alcoholic drink, as in (26):

26. Kocasını iyi adamdı ama çok içiyordu.  
 Husband.POSS. good man.COP.PAST but very drink.PROG.PAST  
 (Her) husband was a good guy, but (he) drank a lot.

As a result, it can be said that in most cases, transitive verbs require their overt objects at least discourse-initially and if they are not within the extra-linguistic environment.

#### 4. TYPES OF NULL OBJECTS

Huang (1984) describes three types of null objects in world's languages: null objects with a specific and definite interpretation, null objects with an indefinite interpretation, and those with a generic interpretation.

## 5. TYPES OF NULL OBJECTS IN TURKISH

### 5.1. Indefinite Null Objects

In Turkish, one type of null objects can be called indefinite null objects. These appear to be of two types. One type is used to stand for non-referential expressions mentioned in the previous discourse, as in (27) and (28):

27. a. Parka girdi.  
park.DAT enter.PAST  
(He) entered the park.
- b. Bir *bank* aradı.  
one bench look for.PAST  
'(He) looked for a bench.'
- c. *Ø* buldu.  
find.PAST  
'(He) found (one)'.
28. a. Bebek'teki kasap *iyi et* satar.  
Bebek.LOC. butcher good meat sell.AOR.  
The butcher in Bebek sells good meat.
- b. Ben hep *Ø* ondan alırım.  
I always he.ABL.buy.AOR.1.PER.SING.  
I always buy (meat) from him.

In (27) and (28) *bir bank* 'a bench' and *iyi et* 'good meat' are not referential expressions, and in (27c) and (28b), the null objects are analogous to indefinite nonspecific *one*-anaphora in English. In these cases, null objects cannot alternate with overt pronouns.

In fact, in Turkish overt pronouns must be strictly co-referential with a textually or situationally evoked discourse entity. For this reason, overt pronouns cannot function as bound variables, i.e. they cannot have an intra-sentential anaphoric link with a c-commanding quantified NP. Instead, a reflexive pronoun must be used because, as has previously been stated, the object cannot be null when it is co-indexed with an intra-sentential argument:

29. *Hiç kimse (\*onu) / kendisini* eleştirenleri sevmez.  
nobody he.ACC. self.ACC. criticize.REL.PLU.ACC. like.NEG.AOR.  
Nobody likes those who criticize him. (Turan, 1998:172)

This constraint on overt pronouns has also been observed in other *pro*-drop languages as in Spanish (Montalbetti 1984:77-108), Catalan (Rigau 1986:149-159) and Chinese (Liejiong 1986:87), among others.

Likewise, overt objects in Turkish cannot function as pronouns of laziness, either. Pronouns of laziness, according to Geach (1968), are simply means of avoiding



repetition of the expression mentioned by the antecedent but not identical with it as exemplified by the pronoun *it* in (30):

30. The man who gave his *paycheck* to his wife was wiser than the man who gave *it* to his mistress. (Bosch 1983:25 attributed to Karttunen 1969) (also cited in Turan, 1998: 173).

The definite pronoun *it* cannot be regarded as co-referential with its antecedent *his paycheck* because the speaker intends to refer to different paychecks with each expression. (Turan, 1998:172-173).

Compare (30) with the corresponding Turkish sentence in (31), where the overt object is illicit:

31. *Maaşını* karısına veren adam metresine \**onu* / *0* veren adamdan daha akıllıdır.

Therefore, there are contexts where only null objects or anaphors can be used. This means that overt pronouns are strictly prohibited unless they are coreferential with an entity within the discourse or situational context.

## 5.2. Definite Null Objects

Turkish also allows definite null objects as long as appropriate discourse conditions are met. There seems to be a discourse rule that prohibits the repetition of phonologically realized arguments in the presence of salient antecedents. This rule may plausibly stem from economy considerations (Chomsky 1988) or the Gricean Maxim of Quantity (Grice, 1975).

At sentence level, null objects occur at coordinate constructions conjoined with conjunctions such *ve* 'and', *yahut* 'or', *ne...ne de* 'neither...nor', etc. This is exemplified in (32) and (33) below:

32. a. *İhtiyar kadın her hafta böyle söyleyerek onu giydirirdi*  
Old woman every week like this say.ADV. she.ACC. dress.PAST.  
The old woman would dress *her* saying this
- b. *ve 0 mektebe yollardı.* (Esendal, 1984:11)  
and school.DAT send.PAST  
and (she) would send *her* to school.
33. a. *Bu evi... bir zenciden alıp*  
this house.ACC one black guy.DAT buy.CONJ.  
(She) bought *this house* from a black guy,
- b. *yahut 0 yaptırıp Nimet'in babasına bağışlamış.* (Esendal, 1984:35)  
or build.CAUS.CONJ. Nimet.GEN father.POSS.DAT. give.HEARSAY.  
or got (*it*) built and gave (*it*) to Nimet's father.

In (32) and (33), the null objects are co-referential with the definite NPs *onu* 'her' and *bu evi* 'this house', respectively. Note that the sentences are coordinated by *ve* 'and' in

(32) and *yahut* 'or' in (33) and both the null objects and their antecedents are objects of their clauses.

This is similar to coordinate conjunct deletion well studied in English null objects in coordinate structures. It was also noted in Turkish by Erguvanlı (1986). Syntactic conjunction demonstrates grammatical parallelism, where the second or following mentions of parallel arguments can be null (Kameyama 1985, 1986). Kameyama (1986) hypothesizes that both in English and Japanese two adjacent utterances in discourse seek maximal parallelism for coherence. She suggests *Property sharing constraint* for null anaphor resolution in Japanese and English which roughly states that an entity in adjacent utterances either continues to be a subject or non-subject but should not switch between them (Kameyama 1985). In this case, the following object can be realized with a phonetically void (null object) or an unstressed pronoun in Japanese and English, respectively. Farrell (1990) argues that there is a similar tendency in the use of null objects in Brazilian Portuguese.

In fact, in Turkish like other languages cited above, a null object is preferably realized as co-referential with an object or a non-subject at sentential or cross-sentential level alike. In complex sentences, a null object cannot refer to the subject of the other clause, as in (34):

34. Ali Can'ın *onu* / *kendisini* / \**0* gördüğünü biliyor.  
Ali Can he.ACC. self.ACC. see.NOM.ACC. know.PROG.  
Ali knows that Can saw him /himself.

This phenomenon appears to be a beyond-sentence level rule. Turan (1995) found that a high percentage of objects that are co-referential with the subject in the previous sentences are in the form of overt pronouns. For example, consider (35):

35. a. İşte tam bu sıralarda *Mustafa Kemal Paşa* buraya gelmiş.  
Right this time Mustafa K.Pasha here.DAT come.HEARSAY.PAST  
Right at time, Mustafa Kemal Pasha came here.  
b. Müftü Efendi de gidip *onu* / # *0* görmüş. (Esendal, 1984: 75)  
Müftü too go.CONJ he.ACC. see. HEARSAY.PAST  
Müftü Efendi went and saw him.

In (35a), *Mustafa Kemal Pasha* is the subject, and in (35b), the object refers to the subject of the previous clause. In this case, an overt pronoun is preferred over a null pronoun.

Erguvanlı (1986) claims that null objects cannot be co-referential with an argument in complex sentences. Indeed, this was also observed in examples (8), (9) and (10). However, in the following examples null objects can be co-referential with an intra-sentential argument so long as it is not the subject:

36. *Ahmet'i* görenler *0* çok severler.  
Ahmet.ACC. see.REL.PLU. very like.AOR.  
Those who see Ahmet like him a lot.

37. *Hocamızı* tanyınca öğrencileri 0 çok  
 teacher.1.PER.PLU:GEN.ACC. know.WHEN. student.3.PER. POSS.PLU. very  
 beğenecek.  
 like.FUT.

When (they) get to know our teacher, her students will like (her) very much.

38. *Ahmet'i* havaalanından alır almaz 0 buraya getir.  
 Ahmet.ACC. airport.ABL. take.when here. bring

'As soon as you take Ahmet from the airport, bring (him) here.

As Erguvanlı argues c-command relations cannot account for these facts. Neither can these data be explained by the principles of Binding Theory since it has nothing to offer for null versus overt NP distinction (see Turan 1995 for an analysis of definite null vs. overt objects in Turkish discourse).

### 5.3. Generic Null Objects

Turkish also allows Generic null objects as seen in examples (39)-(43):

39. Bu ilaç 0 uyutur.  
 this medication sleep.CAUS.AOR.  
 This medication causes (people) to sleep.
40. Spor 0 gençleştirir.  
 sports young.VERB.PART. CAUS.AOR.  
 Sports makes (people) look younger.'
41. Klasik müzik 0 huzur verir.  
 classical music peace give.AOR.  
 'Classical music gives (people) peace'.
42. Arabesk müzik 0 hüzünlendirir.  
 Arabesque music blue.VERB.PART.CAUS.AOR.  
 Arabesque music causes (people) to be in melancholy.
43. Dikkat! Köpek 0 ısırır.  
 caution dog bite.AOR.  
 Caution! The dog bites.

Rizzi (1986) shows that generic null objects in Italian are widely used and they are independent of the specific verb and verb type. By contrast, Cote (1994) argues English generic objects occur only with lexically specified verbs. In Turkish, these types of objects are very limited and they are used in generic sentences. Note that all the sentences in (39)-(43) all sentences are in Aorist. Here the null object has to be necessarily understood as [+human, +plural]. They do not have a discourse antecedent previously mentioned, and these null objects with arbitrary reference can appear at discourse-initial position.

## 6. CONCLUSION

This paper sheds some light on Turkish grammar: Firstly, it is shown that most Turkish transitive verbs do not have intransitive alternations, and a null object has to be posited in cases where transitive verbs are used without overt objects. It appears to be the case that some limited number of transitive verbs that are used intransitively have a different meaning as we have seen in the cases of *bir şey okumak* 'to read something', and *okumak* 'to study'.

It is also shown that Turkish null objects do not form a uniform group, and at least three different broad categories of null objects are presented with examples: Indefinite null objects comparable to *one*-anaphora in English or those that function as bound variables. Definite null objects have to have a definite antecedent in the prior discourse. Generic null objects, which always have human and arbitrary features, appear in very limited contexts in Turkish.

There are further questions that must be addressed in future research studies since null objects provide a very rich topic of investigation. We need to know which empty categories null objects belong to, i.e. Are they all variables, or are some pronouns, or any other mixed category (see endnote 2). How speakers identify null objects is another question. Finally, the contexts where null objects and overt objects are in complementary distribution and where they overlap must also be investigated in further detail, even though some preliminary answers to these questions can be found in Turan (1995 and 1998).

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