

# ADVERBIAL CLAUSES AS TOPICS IN TURKISH

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## 1. Introduction

The main aim of this paper is to explore the question: are adverbial clauses functioning as topics in Turkish? Studies have shown that adverbial clauses function as topics in languages such as Hua, Tagalog, Goadie and Turkish (Haiman 1978, Marchese 1977). These studies have made important contributions to our understanding of the pragmatic function of adverbial clauses. They have done so, I emphasize, only on the grounds that these languages utilize the conditional marker *only* to topicalize noun phrases. What they have not attempted to do is analyze adverbial clauses in naturally occurring texts. Instead, examples have been taken out of context and conditional clauses have been compared with topics.

Sections I and II of this paper establish evidence that Turkish adverbial clauses function as topics, not only on the basis that the conditional suffix is used to topicalize noun phrases as many languages exhibit, but that Turkish, unlike any other language so far analyzed in the literature, utilizes the adverbial temporal marker/suffix *-Ince* 'when *also* to topicalize a noun phrase. This further supports my argument that adverbial clauses do have this explicit function in Turkish.

Section III briefly deals with the importance of pauses as indicated by comma punctuation in Turkish adverbial clauses. My findings reveal that these pauses are used for two purposes; the first for semantic and the second for pragmatic reasons.

The data used for this study comprised six books, representing three different genres:

1. Narratives
  - a. *İssizliğin Ortasında* 'In the Midst of Loneliness' (Eroglu 1983)
  - b. *Gecenin Öteki Yüzü* 'The Other Face of the Night' (Füruzan 1987)
2. Procedural texts
  - a. *Yemek Pişirme* 'Cook Book' (Eryilmaz 1990)
  - b. *Anneler için Çocuk Bakımları* 'Child-care for Mothers' (Aker 1977)
3. Expository Texts
  - a. *İstanbul'un Kuşatılması*, 'The Siege of Istanbul' (Sefer 1989)
  - b. *Merzifonlu Kara Mustafa Paşa* 'Merzifonian Kara Mustafa Paşa' (Caglar 1986)

### 1.1 Defining 'topic'

The modern discussion about the pragmatic function of adverbial clauses starts with Haiman's (1978) article; 'Conditionals are topics'. In his article, Haiman presents evidence from Hua, a Papuan language, and suggests that adverbial clauses, specifically conditional clauses, be treated as topics of their main clauses. Although Haiman's article has been very influential, with many publications following (Akatsuko 1986; Ford & Thompson 1986; Schiffrin 1992), many different definitions of 'topic' have been put forward in the literature.

The term 'topic' comes from the Greek *topos*, a 'place' or 'commonplace', via the adjective plural *topika*, 'commonplace things' (De Beaugrande 1992:243). Arising from this definition, a 'topic' would be described as common subject matter that everyone ought to know and be able to talk about, something that may also be used by orators as a method of fascinating or attracting general audiences. Although it is used rather frequently in the literature, the term 'topic' does not have a general consensus on its status and definition. The reasons for this disagreement are not difficult to understand. Firstly, 'topic' may be considered as a *multiplex*

phenomenon of language (De Beaugrande 1992), relating to virtually all of the established 'levels' or 'components' listed below:

- a. **Phonology:** A topic can be identified in the intonation pattern of a tone group, as by a lower or falling tone.
- b. **Morphology:** A language may have inflections or particles for indicating topics, such as definite articles.
- c. **Syntax:** Some languages indicate topicality through clause organization for example, by placing it before the nontopical entity.
- d. **Pragmatics** Topicality depends on what speaker and hearer are presumed to know in a given discourse situation.
- e. **Semantics:** A topic is a content or proposition, for example, one on a 'global' level of discourse

The second factor which explains the difficulty in defining topic is that it is merely not a linguistic, but also a *social* and *psychological* notion. Different societies have an inventory of topics that are considered inappropriate for discourse among certain participants. For instance, the topics of 'birth' and 'death' are restricted to some degree in Bali; where people who are dead are also not deemed proper topics for discourse, consequently blotting out ancestors (Geertz 1973). Alternatively, topic as a psychological notion implies that the topic must be organized in cognition and memory, for example, in terms of 'frames' or 'schemas' that promote discourse processing by indicating what typically belongs to a topic (Chafe 1984).

### 1.1.2 Haiman's definition of topic

The notion of 'topic' may be compared with a concept like 'focus', in which case it applies to constituents that convey given, as opposed to new information in a sentence. In the literature, however, the term 'topic' has also been used to refer to the part of the sentence which reveals what the sentence 'is about' (Brown & Yule 1983). In the latter conception, 'topics' need not convey given or old information. For the purposes of my study, I have adopted Haiman's (1978:585) definition of topic, which reflects the resemblance in function he sees between topics and conditional clauses:

'the topic represents an entity whose existence is agreed upon by the speaker and his audience. As such, it constitutes the framework which has been selected for the following discourse.'

Following Haiman (1978), I claim that not only conditional clauses, but also temporal, reason and purpose adverbial clauses function as topics in Turkish. Haiman's notion of topic, however, is *inadequate* in recognizing the discourse function of conditional clauses. Because of this, I analyzed adverbial clauses, specifically conditional clauses, in relation to *both* the preceding and following discourse material, and *then* attempted to relate these functions to Haiman's definition of topic.

## 1.2 Evidence that adverbial clauses *are* topics in Turkish

Before proceeding with the discussion on adverbial clauses functioning as topics in Turkish, I would like to mention the four factors which essentially led me to believe that adverbial clauses have this pragmatic function in Turkish. The *first* is that, although adverbial clauses may function as topics in many languages, in Turkish this pragmatic function is explicitly marked with the conditional suffix *-(i)sE* also serving to topicalize NPs. Consider the following examples:

### Topic NP

- (1) *Lale-se kitap oku-yor.*  
Lale-TOP book read-PRES  
As for Lale, (she) is reading a book.
- (2) *Bu roman-sa çok ilginç.*  
this novel-TOP very interesting  
As for this novel, (it's) very interesting.

### Conditional Clause

- (3) *Dağ-da kar var-sa. kayak yap-ar-iz.*  
mountain-LOC snow there is-COND ski do-AOR-1pl  
If there is snow on the mountain, we can ski.
- (4) *Dükkan-a gid-er-sen, süt al*  
shop-DAT go-AOR-2sgCOND milk buy  
If you got to the shop, buy (some) milk.

The second factor which supports my claim that adverbial clauses function as topics in Turkish is related to the fact that not only conditionals and topic NPs share the same morphology in Turkish, but also the regular adverbial temporal marker *-Ince* 'when' is also the regular topic marker of NPs. In these cases, *-Ince* is suffixed only to the verb *gel* 'come' but is used specifically to topicalize noun phrases.

### Topic NP

- (5) *Çorap-lar-i.m-a gel.ince, çok pis.*  
socks-PL-POSS.DAT come-TOP very dirty  
As for (concerning) my socks, (they are) very dirty.
- (6) *Sigara iç-en-ler-e gel -ince, rahar-siz*  
cigarette smoke-REL-PL-DAT come-TOP comfortable-NEC  
*ol-ur-um on-lar-in yan-in-da.*  
be-AOR-1sg it-PL-POSS near-POSS-LOC  
As for (concerning) those who smoke, I feel uncomfortable near them. Temporal Clause

### Temporal Clause

- (7) *Türkiye-ye gid-ince, bana kart gönder.*  
Turkey-DAT go-WHEN me postcard send  
When (you) go to Turkey, send me a postcard.
- (8) *Televizyon-a bak-,inca, her şey-i unut-ur-um.*  
television-DAT look-WHEN every thing-ACC forget-AOR-1 sg  
When I watch television, I forget everything (all my 'worries').

The *third* influencing factor which suggests that adverbial clauses are functioning as topics in Turkish is related to the fact that word-order plays an important part in marking subordinate clauses. According to an analysis of preposed and postposed conditional clauses, 96% of adverbial clauses precede their main clauses (see Table 2). The placement of adverbial clauses sentence- initially also conforms to the general characteristic of topics put forward by Li & Thompson (1976) that they appear in sentence-initial position.

The *fourth* and final influencing factor is also related to the characteristics put forward by Li & Thompson (1976) for topic prominent languages such as:

- a. selectional restrictions; a topic need not have a selectional restriction with any verb in a sentence;

- b. the verb determines the ‘subject’ but not the ‘topic’;
- c. the functional role of topic is constant across languages; as Chafe (1976:50) states:  
 ‘What the topics appear to do is limit the applicability of the main predication to a certain restricted domain... The topic sets a *spatial, temporal, or individual framework* within which the main predication holds.’

### 1.3 Does similar morphological marking equal similarity in meaning?

Conditional clauses and topics are marked identically in a number of unrelated languages such as Hua and Tagalog, as mentioned, indicating that conditional clauses and topics must be related categories. This is interesting because on the surface they do not appear to be related. However definitions of conditionals given by logicians (Copi 1972) and of topics given by linguists seem to converge. Haiman (1978:564) states that conditionals, like topics are

‘givens which constitute the frame of reference with respect to which the main clause is either true (if a proposition), or felicitous (it not)’.

Thus, the superficial similarity of the topic and conditional marking morphology is a reflection in the underlying similarity of their meanings. Haiman (1978:565) claims that languages which share the same morphology in marking conditionals and topics will also be accompanied by one of the following features:

- a) the characteristic mark of the conditional and the topic will be identical.
- b) both will be identical with a third category, interrogative, and
- c) the characteristic marks of the conditional and the topic will be distinct, but one will be paraphraseable by the other.

The first two are applicable to Turkish because the suffix **-(i)sE** is used to mark both conditional clauses and topic NPs and this suffix may be replaced by, and when done so, resembles the polar interrogative *-ml* in both topics and conditional clauses. The tendency for conditionals, topics and questions to share the same morphology in some languages can be explained by the notion that conditionals, topics and questions are supposed parts of a sentence. They may be thought of as establishing a ‘framework’ (Chafe 1984) within which to proceed with the discourse, much as a question might. The similarity of conditionals and topics also lies in the assumption that conditionals, like other topics, are established in discourse as given facts or entities with a formal device whereby the speaker seeks the agreement of the interlocutor as to their validity. Haiman (1978:572) states that this common device is the question ‘*you know?*’ which gives the common interrogative morphology of conditionals and topics. The following examples taken from a history book illustrate these usages:

- (9) *Eğer savas bir bomba paflamasi gibi birdenbire*  
 if war a bomb explosion like at once  
*çik-ar-sa. millet-ler savas-a engel ol-mak*  
 get out-AOR-COND people-PL war-DAT barrier be-INF  
*için güc-ler-i-ni birles-tir-meli-dir-ier.*  
 to force-PL-POSS-ACC join-CAUS-NEC-MOD-PL

If the war starts suddenly like a bomb explosion, people should not hesitate to join their forces. (Sefer 1989>

- (10) *Seyret-tği-I program ise çok sikici.*  
 watch-REL-ACC program TOP very boring

As for the (television) program (he’s> watching, (its) very boring. (Eroglu 1983: 85)

#### 1.4 Significance of comma punctuation for Haiman's proposal

In Haiman's terms the conditional clause in (9) may be paraphrased as:

*You know the war, if it starts suddenly like a bomb explosion,  
then (given that) people should not hesitate to join forces'*

and the topic NP in (10) as:

*You know the television program he's watching, it's very boring.'*

Although it would not be acceptable to replace the suffix **-(i)sE** in example (9) with the polar interrogative **-ml**, it would so in spoken discourse because it emphasizes the verb **çkar** 'to get out to which it is attached. The topic NP **program** 'program' in (10) may be replaced by the polar interrogative **-ml** in both spoken and written discourse. Example (12) demonstrates the significance of comma punctuation in constructions where the topic NP may be replaced by the polar interrogative **.-ml** in Turkish.

- (11) *Birinci dünya savas-in-dan sonra demokrasi yönetim-in-i*  
first world war-POSS-ABL after democracy government-POSS.ACC  
*devam et-tir-en İngiltere ve Fransa bu saldır-i*  
continue do-CAUS-REL English and France this attack-NOM  
*hareket-ler-in-e karsi teşebbüs ede-me-di-ler.*  
movement-PL-POSS-DAT against undertake do-NEC-PAST-PL

After the First World War, England and France, which continued to use democracy as its governing form, could not undertake to use force against this attack.

- (12) *Amerika ise, Birinci Dünya Savaşı, son-un-da imza-la-nan*  
America TOP First World War end-POSS-LOC signature-VB-REL  
*antlaşma-lar-i onay-la-ma-mış ve Avrupa mesele-ler-i*  
agreement-PL -ACC acceptance-VB-NEG-PAST and Europe affair-PL-ACC  
*ile ilgi-si-ni kes-miş*  
with interest-POSS-ACC cut-PAST

As for America, it did not accept the agreement which was signed at the end of the First World War and became uninterested in European affairs. (Sefer 1989:36)

In example (12) *Amerika ise* 'as for America' is clearly functioning as the topic because the writer is specifically talking about the NP *Amerika* and the rest of the sentence is functioning as the comment because this is what the writer is saying about *Amerika*. Although Chafe (1976) argues that contrastive information constitutes new information, the fact that the contrastive topic *Amerika ise* 'as for America' (it is contrastive because America is being compared to France and England in example (11)) can be marked as a question in written and spoken discourse, by replacing the suffix **-(i)sE** with the polar interrogative **-ml** indicates that the question is a request for affirmation or recognition of the existence of the topic, therefore rendering it as not 'new' but 'old information. In such cases it is *crucial* that a comma in written and a pause in spoken language, follows the suffix **-ml** to obtain the interpretation described by Haiman. If the suffix **-(i)sE** on 'America' in example (12) was to be replaced by the interrogative **-ml**, without a comma following, the sentence would be interpreted as:

'Was it America that didn't accept the agreement which was signed at the end of the First World War and became uninterested in European affairs?'

However, if a comma does follow the interrogative suffix **-ml** then this represents the topic as an entity whose existence has been agreed upon by the speaker and the addressee, rendering it as 'old' information. Haiman (1978) *needs* to take into account the significance of intonation

for a language like Turkish if his claim that conditionals, topics and questions are presupposed parts of a sentence is to be valid.

### 1.5 Inadequacy of the definition of topic given by Haiman

In the preceding section (1.1.2), I mentioned that Haiman's (1978) notion of topic has not adequately recognized the discourse function of adverbial clauses, specifically conditional clauses. I made this statement on the grounds that Haiman tries to bring together the concept of 'topic' and conditional clause without analyzing conditional clauses in naturally occurring texts, instead he presents isolated sentences and utterances which are taken out of context. In order to provide a comparison of conditional clauses and a very complex and discourse-based notion such as topic, I have attempted to test his proposals on naturally occurring texts. This is also the reason why in the following section, following Ford & Thompson (1986:356), I claim that not only preposed conditional clauses but also concessive clauses can serve as topics *only* when they are related to the preceding discourse in one of the four different ways which are describe below.

### 1.6 Conditional and concessive clauses function as topics in four situations

The conditional clauses in these books, comprising 300 pages, were analyzed according to the way they function as topics with respect to the preceding discourse. Examples are given to show how conditional clauses function as topics *only* when they are analyzed according to the preceding discourse material. The first of these is the most obvious way a conditional clause can function as a topic; by repeating an earlier claim and by providing 'shared' knowledge for the following material. This can be exemplified as in (13) and (14):

#### Conditional Clause

- (13) *İnsan fena-lik gör-düg-ü yer-de, karsili k ol-arak yine*  
 person bad-NOM see-REL-ACC place-LOC revenge be-SIM again  
*fena-lik et-me-ye calis-ma-mali, daima iyi-lik et-me-ye*  
 bad-NOM do-VN-MT try-MEG-NEC always good-NOM do- VN-DAT  
*gayret et-meli-dir.*  
 try do-NEC-MOD

As a form of revenge, people should not treat other people badly just because they have been mistreated by others, but instead they should always try to be good to other people.

- (14) *Cünkü fena-lik ed-er-se yine öbür yer-den fena-lik gö-ür*  
 because bad-NOM do-AOR-COND again other place-LOC bad-NOM see.AOR  
 Because if he does (something) bad, he will be mistreated once again from the other place (person). (Furuzan 1987:96)

#### Concessive Clause

- (15) *O-nun için insan önce kendi-n-i terbiye*  
 That-POSS why person first own-REF-ACC manners  
*et-meli ve bilgi sahib-i ol-mali.*  
 do-NEC and knowledge owner-ACC be-NEC

That's why a person should first teach himself manners and learn to be polite to others.

- (16) *Yoksa elbise, ve para ile insane itibar bul-a-maz.*  
 or else dress and money with person respect find-POSSIB-NEG  
 Or else a person cannot be respected because he has a lot o money or dresses well.

- (17) *Bul-sa bile bir iki gün-lük ol-ur.*  
 find-COND even one two day-ADJ be-AOR  
 Even if he is respected, it will be for a couple of days. (Füruzan 1987:123)

Examples (14) and (17) suggest that a conditional and a concessive clause may serve as a framework for the following discourse by *assuming* something which has been mentioned in the preceding discourse.

The *second* way in which a conditional clause can serve as a topic by providing shared knowledge for following material is when the conditional clause offers a contrast to something which has been stated in the previous discourse material. In cases like (19), a hypothetical contrast with the preceding claim is presented in the if clause (20) *Ama kurt gibi hirs-la ilderde daha iyi olacak diye bekleyip değerdendirmezse* ‘but if (he) waits and doesn’t make the most of it and thinks to himself with the enthusiasm of a fox that it will be better in the future’ and the consequent presents a new outcome, that is undesired and that would result from that hypothetical situation, i.e., *aldanir* ‘(he) will be fooled. This can be exemplified as in (20):

- (18) *Ileri zaman insan ne ol-acağ-i-ni bil-mez.*  
 future time person what be-FUT-POSS-ACC know-NEC  
 A person does not know what will happen in the future.
- (19) *Simdi elin-e firsat ge-ç-en kimse hemen o-nu değerdendir-meli-dir.*  
 now hand-DAT opportunity pass-REL person immediately it-ACC  
 value-VB-CAUS-NEC-MOD  
 If a person is given an opportunity to do something, (he) should make the most of it immediately.
- (20) *Ama kurt gibi hirs-la ilder-de daha iyi ol-acak diye bekle-yip değerdendir-mez-se alda-n-ir.*  
 but fox like enthusiasm future-LOC more good be-FUT  
 think wait-SS value-CAUS-NEC-COND fool-REF-AOR  
 But if he waits and doesn’t make the most of it and thinks to himself with the enthusiasm of a fox that it will be better in the future, (then) he will fool himself.  
 (Füruzan 1987:85)

The *third* type of situation in which a proposed conditional clause can provide shared information, that is, a ‘framework for the following material is when it provides exemplification. This type of conditional clause introduces a particular case or illustration of a generalization in the preceding discourse material and provides exemplification in the subsequent conditional clause. This can be exemplified as in (21):

- (21) *Pis ve kirli su-lar-la tarla-da yetiştir-il-en ve su-la-nan sebze-ler hastalik-lar-a neden ol-abil-ir.*  
 dirty and muddy water-PL-with field-LOC grow-caus-pass-rel  
 and water-VB-REL vegetable-PL disease-PL-DAT cause be-POT-AOR  
 Vegetables which have been grown in fields with dirty and muddy water may cause diseases.

- (22) *örneğın marul salata domates ve havuç gibi çiy*  
 example lettuce cucumber tomatoes and carrot like raw  
*ol-arak ye-nebil-en sebze-ler de böyle gel-iyor-sa*  
 be-SIM eat-POT-REL vegetable-PL also like this come-PRES-COND  
*mikrop-lu hasta-lik-lar çocuk-lar-a geç-ebil-ir.*  
 germ-with sick-NOM-PL child-PL-DAT pass-POT-AOR

If, for example, vegetables such as lettuce, cucumber, tomatoes and carrots which can be eaten raw, come from these places also, then infectious diseases may be passed onto children. (Aker 1977:105)

In example (22), the sentence containing the conditional is serving to present a special instance of the generalization expressed in the previous discourse in (21), that is, (22) provides specific examples of ‘vegetables’ which had been mentioned in (21).

The *fourth* and final situation in which a conditional clause can serve as a topic for the following material is a situation in which it has none of the direct relationships with the preceding material described above, but rather opens up new possibilities whose consequences are to be explored in the subsequent discourse material.

- (23) *Yaz-di ama üşü-yor-dum, ön taraf-a*  
 summer-PAST but be cold-CONT-PAST front side-DAT  
*yürü-r-se-m Zafer-in anne-si-nin*  
 walk-AOR-COND-1sg Zafer-POSS mother-POSS-POSS  
*egemen-liğ-in-de-ki bölge-ye geç-miş ol-acak-tim.*  
 sovereign-NOM-POSS-LOC-REL area-DAT pass-PAST be-fut-1sgPAST

It was summer but I was cold, ill were to walk to the front side, I would be on Zalers mothers property.

- (24) *Eğer arka bahçe-ye gid-er-sem, ön taraf-ta-ki Zafer-in*  
 if back garden-DAT go-AOR-COND front side LOC-REL Zafer-POSS  
*baba-si, Sebahattin amca-nin bölge-si-ne gir-ecek-tim.*  
 father-POSS Sebahattin uncle-POSS area-POSS-DAT enter-FUT-PAST

If I go to the back garden, I would be entering Zafers lather, Uncle Sebahattin’s territory. (Eroglu 1983: 39)

The preceding example illustrates a pair of contrasting options that are being explored by the writer, that is ‘taking the risk and walking to the front garden’ or either taking another risk and ‘walking to the back garden. In other words, this pair of conditional clauses states two options whose consequences are to be explored in the following sections of the discourse.

### 1.7 Occurrence of four types of conditional clauses in narratives, expository and procedural texts

An analysis of 300 hundred initial conditional clauses in three discourse genres. shows that *assuming* conditional clauses occur more frequently in narratives and expository texts than in procedural texts. This is to be expected since procedural texts contain a large percentage of conditional clauses that are contrastive and explore options. In procedural texts, problems may arise in the description of a certain task that is to be carried out. In these cases, conditional clauses that are cornrastive and that explore options, present ideas in dealing with the problems that may be encountered in the process of carrying out a task.

TABLE 1. **Initial Conditional Clauses %**

	Narratives	Expository	Procedural
Assuming	28	29	16
Contrasting	28	18	34
Exemplify	25	36	24
Options	19	17	26

### 1.8 In Summary

In this section, I showed that Haiman's (1978) definition of topic was inadequate in bringing together the concept of conditional clauses and a discourse-based notion such as 'topic'. I made this statement on the grounds that Haiman tries to prove that conditional clauses are topics because the two categories both share the same morphology in a number of unrelated languages such as Hua, Tagalog and Turkish. I agree with Haiman's proposal that conditional clauses *are* topics, *but only* when the information in the conditional and concessive clauses is related to the preceding discourse in one of the four ways that I described:

- a. by relating an assumption presented earlier in the text,
- b. by offering a contrast to an earlier assumption,
- c. by providing exemplification of an earlier generalization, and
- d. by exploring options made at certain points in the discourse and that the information presented in the conditional clauses explores the possible situations which may result as a consequence of the option being taken.

I also demonstrated that Haiman's (1978:564) proposal that conditionals are topics because they are both:

'givens which constitute the frame of reference with respect to the main clause'

was problematic. The superficial similarity of the topic and conditional marking morphology may be replaced by a polar interrogative in languages such as Hua, Tagalog and Turkish which use the morphology to mark topics and conditionals. Thus, according to Haiman, the tendency for conditionals, topics, and questions to share the same morphology may be explained by the fact that these three categories are presupposed parts of the sentence. For Haiman's claims to be valid for Turkish, he needs to take into consideration that a pause (comma in the written form) following the polar interrogative *-ml* is essential for questions, topics and conditionals to be interpreted as presupposed parts of the sentence (see example 12).

### 2. Temporal and purpose clauses as topics

In this section, I examine the assumption that not only conditional clauses, as was shown in section 1.6, but also adverbial clauses, such as temporal and purpose clauses can be topicalized in clause-initial position in Turkish. As my findings in (Table 2) show, these three adverbial clause types precede their main clauses in the discourse genres of procedural and expository texts (except for a small percentage of conditional and purpose clauses which are postposed in narratives) indicating that not only conditional clauses but also purpose and temporal clauses are also functioning as topics.

TABLE 2. **Preposed vs. Postposed Adverbial Clauses**

	Temporal		Purpose		Conditional	
	Initial	Final	Initial	Final	Initial	Final
Expository	100	0	100	0	100	0
Procedural	100	0	100	0	100	0
Narratives	100	0	82	18	89	11

Table 2 shows that temporal clauses always occur clause-initially in the three discourse genres that was examined, and conditional and purpose clauses occur with a very high frequency in narratives; 89% of the time for conditional and 82% of the time for purpose clauses. I suggest that this can be explained by the assumption, as Haiman (1978) states, that not only conditional but temporal and purpose clauses are functioning as topics in Turkish.

The clause-initial placement of adverbial clauses is also supported by Cicon's sequential and topicality principle (1990:972) which involves the use of word-order to indicate topicality. This principle states that:

- a. 'more important or urgent information tends to be placed first in the string'; and
- b. 'less accessible information tends to be placed first in the string.'

In other words, writers need to provide their readers what they need to know most at a particular time in the text. Sentence-initial placement of topics is also one of the seven criteria used to distinguish subject and topic by Li and Thompson (1976:465). They state that topics occur in sentence-initial position because of discourse strategies.

### 2.1 Postposing of adverbial clauses

As had been mentioned earlier, the unmarked position for conditional, purpose, and temporal clauses seems to be sentence-initial position, in terms of the discourse function which they have, that of providing a framework for the following material. According to my data, however, conditional and purpose clauses may also occur in final position in narratives. Despite Thompson and Longacre's (1985:174) claim that an

'adverbial subordinate clause must precede the main clause *in Turkish*',

my data suggests that conditional and purpose clauses may also occur in final position in narratives (see Table 2) indicating that this is a stylistic option used by writers as a means of 'focusing' and 'highlighting' rather than an absolute necessity or requirement in Turkish.

### 2.2 Temporal clauses as topics

In section 2 I made the claim that temporal clauses are functioning as topics in Turkish because the temporal marker *-nce* also serves to topicalize NPs. The following adverbial time clauses, besides functioning as topics, play a significant role in connected discourse creating cohesion and coherence in the text.

- (25) *Bir gece-de 72 gemi Boğaz'in Tophane*  
 one night-LOC 72 ships Bosphorus-POSS Tophane  
*liman-in-dan Tepebaşı-na çıkar-il-di.*  
 harbour-POSS-ABL Tepebasina-DAT taken out-PASS-PAST

In one night, 72 ships were taken from the Bosphorus' Tophane harbour and taken to Tepebasi.

- (26) *Ora-dan-da Kasimpaşa-ya getir-il-erek Haliç-e in-dir-il-di.*  
 there-ABL-LOC Kasimpasa-loc bring-PASS-SIM Haliç-DAT get down-CAUS-PASS-PAST  
 From there, they were brought to Kasimpasa and taken to Haliç.
- (27) *Bizanslilar, sabahleyin Türk gem-ler-in-i Haliç-te*  
 Byzantines morning-LOC Turkish Ship-PL-POSS-ACC Haliç-LOC  
*gor-ünce, ne yap-acak-lar-in-i şaş-ir-di-lar.*  
 see-WHEN what do-FUT-PL-POSS-3plACC surprise-AOR-PAST-PL  
 The Byzantines didn't know what to do when they saw the Turkish ships at Haliç that morning. (Sefer 1989:54)

### 2.2.1 Inferability of temporal clauses

These examples contain adverbial clauses that are inferable from other elements in the text. For instance, we know that 'mornings' follow or precede 'nights' (in this case 'follows') and that *oradanda* 'from there' in (26) is 'textually evoked' (Prince 1981:232) in that it refers to 'Tepebaşı' in (27). This suggests that adverbial time clauses *primarily* contain information which are 'given' or 'inferable' from the preceding material. There are, however, examples of adverbial time clauses which have been mentioned for the first time and contain 'new' information. In these cases, the 'new' information is expected to be identified by the reader and therefore rendering it as 'familiar' information. Put differently, the writer assumes that the information presented in the temporal clause is shared knowledge and that it is available in the reader's 'universe of discourse' (Virtanen 1992:105). The following adverbial time clause (28) which is considered to be 'new information in the sense that it has not been mentioned or is not inferable from the preceding elements in the text is assumed by the writer to be available in the consciousness of the reader because the mentioned date is such an important date in European history ('Istanbul was conquered by the Turks in 1453').

- (28) *Savaş, 6 Nisan sabah-i 1453-te başla-dığ-in-da*  
 war 6 April morning-ACC 1453-LOC start-PAST-2sg-LOC  
*Bizansli-lar korku için-de-ydi.*  
 Byzantine-PL fear in-LOC-PAST

When war started on the 6 of April 1453, the Byzantines were in fear. (Sefer 1989:56)

From what has been described above, preposed adverbial time clauses share many of the characteristics set out by Li and Thompson (1976) for topics. As shown in example (28), they occur in sentence initial position and in Chafe's terms (1976:50) the topic;

'sets a spatial, temporal, or individual framework within which the main predication holds.'

### 2.2.2 Topic as setting a spatial and temporal framework for the following material

Similar comments regarding topics have also been made by Friedman (1976:142) who claims that topics are those nominals which are introduced first, thus creating a scene which I think can also be appropriately applied to temporal and locative adverbial clauses. It is also interesting to note that the Japanese topic marker *wa* is believed to be possibly derived from Old Japanese *ba* meaning 'place or 'situation' (Haiman 1978:585) Generally, as with conditional and purpose clauses, adverbial time clauses are independent from the rest of the sentence, as are topics (Li & Thompson 1976:466) in that, they do not function as the main predication of the sentence. They are also definite according to Chafe's (1976) definition of definite topic noun phrases which I think is also applicable to adverbial clauses:

I think you already know and can identify the particular referent I have in mind.'

Particularly with reference to Chafe's definition of topic given above, adverbial time clauses are topics because they set a temporal framework for the event which is to follow in the main clause.

The following passage taken from a history book clearly indicates that temporal and purpose adverbial clause are functioning as topics in Turkish. The passage starts with a temporal adverbial clause, but it is 'old' information because the passage leading up to the one that has been translated was about the victory in the Dandanakan war: (the temporal and purpose clauses are 'old' information because they have been mentioned in the preceding discourse). The passage is titled

***Malazgirt Meydan Savaşı, ve Sonuçları.***

'The Malazgirt War and Its Consequences'

- (29) ***Dandanakan zafer-in-in kazan-il-ma-sin-dan sonra,***  
 Dandanakan victory-3sgPOSS-GEN win-PASS-NOM-3sgPOSS-ABL after  
*her yön-de fetih-ler-e devam ed-il-di.*  
 every direction-LOC conquest-PL-DAT continue do-PASS-PAST

After the victory of the Dandanakan war, the conquests continued in all directions.

- (30) ***Bu sıra-lar-da, zaten Anadolu-ya Türk akin-lar-i***  
 this time-PL-LOC anyway Anatolia-DAT Turkish raid-PL-ACC  
*devam ed-iyor-du.*  
 continue be-CONT-PAST

During this time, the Turkish raids on Anatolia were continuing anyway.

- (31) ***Anadolu-ya yap-il-an akin-lar-dan sonra, baari-lar kazan-il-di.***  
 Anatolia-DAT do-PASS-REL raid-PL-ABL after success-PL win-PASS-PAST  
 After the raids on Anatolia, many victories were won.

- (32) ***Bu durum Bizans İmparator-un-u endise-len-dir-me-ye başla-di.***  
 this situation Byzantine Emperor-POSS-DAT anxiety.VB-CAUS-INF-DAT start-PAST  
 This situation caused the Byzantine Emperor to worry.

- (33) ***Bizans İmparator-u Romanos Diogenes Türk-ler-in***  
 Byzantine Emperor-DAT Romanos Diogenes Turk-PL-3plPOSS  
*akin-lar-in-i dur-dur-mak iste-di.*  
 raid-PL-POSS-ACC stop-CAUS-INF want-PAST

The Byzantine Emperor Roman Diogenes wanted to stop the raids of the Turks.

- (34) ***Türk-ler-i dur-dur-mak, onlar-in Anadolu-ya***  
 Turk-PL-ACC stop-CAUS-INF them-3plPOSS Anatolia-DAT  
*yerleş-me-si-ni engel-le-mek için, hazır-lik-lar-a başla-di.*  
 settle-NOM-PPOSS-ACC barrier-VB-INF to ready-NOM-PL-DAT start-PAST

In order to stop and prevent their settlement in Anatolia, he started on preparations.

- (35) ***Selçuk-lu Sultan-i Alp Arslan ise doğu-da ve batı-da***  
 Selçuk-ADJ Sultan-ACC Alp Arslan as east-LOC and west-LOC  
*fetih-ler-e devam ed-iyor-du.*  
 conquest-PL-DAT continue be-CONT-PAST

The Sultan of Selçuk, Alp Arslan, was continuing with the conquests in the east and the west.

- (36) *Sultan Alp Arslan, Malazgirt ve Erciş-i al-dik-tan*  
 Sultan Alp Arslan Malazgirt and Erciş-ACC conquer-PAST-ABL  
*sonra, Misir üzerine yürü-yuş-e geç-ti.*  
 after Egypt upon walk-NOM-DAT start-PAST  
 After Conquering Malazgirt and Erciş, Sultan Alp Arslan started his raids on Egypt.
- (37) *Halep-i kuşat-tig-i sira-da, Bizans imparator-un-un*  
 Halep-ACC seige-REL-ACC during-LOC Byzantine emperor-POSS-POSS  
*bir ordu ile Anadolu-ya gel-diğ-i haber al-in-di.*  
 a army with Anatolia-DAT come-REL-ACC news get-PASS-PAST  
 During his seizure of Halep, it was reported that the Byzantine Emperor came to Anatolia with an army.

Considering the temporal and purpose clause given in examples (29-37), these adverbial clauses share the same properties which have been attributed to topical noun phrases by Chafe (1976). These are:

- they are only loosely connected to the main clause (this is indicated by a comma following the temporal and purpose clause. The presence of a comma indicates that the adverbial clause is not bound' (Chafe 1984) to its main clause);
- they do not function as arguments of the main predicate;
- they are highly repetitive, containing old or assumed information (definite);
- they serve to frame the event in the following clause.

As the examples given above indicate, temporal clauses function as extremely effective signposting devices. Repetition of the prior text enables the reader to remember the information more easily.

### 2.3 Are adverbial clauses given?

In this section, I address the issue of clause initial adverbial clauses and determine whether the information in them can be regarded as familiar and that in the main clause as unfamiliar. The purpose of this discussion is to view adverbial clauses from the perspective of information dynamics in the three discourse genres that was examined; narratives, expository texts, and procedural texts. To examine the points I would like to make, these three discourse genres were specifically chosen because:

- procedural texts contain a significant number of conditional clauses;
- expository texts (which include passages taken from two history books) tend to use a large number of adverbial clauses containing dates and place- names that signal 'text-strategic continuities (Givon 1 983) in the temporal and locative sense; and
- narratives provide interesting examples of purpose and reason adverbial clauses.

We have discussed that when topic' is conceived of as something given', adverbial clauses can be analyzed accordingly as the given (presupposed') parts of the sentence to which they belong (Givon:1 982:1 0). This conception can explain the difference between preposed and postposed adverbial clauses, since topical adverbial clauses almost invariably precede their main clause. By contrast, postposed adverbial clauses can be assigned an entirely different information status, for instance, 'focus' or 'assertion'. The difficulty with this approach is that while that 'new' or 'focal' information may be an appropriate characterization of what is conveyed by postposed adverbial clauses, it is not difficult to find preposed adverbial clauses that definitely introduce 'new' information. In fact, Bolkestein (1 987.) argues against the rigid equation of subclauses with topical/given information. For instance the following

example (39) of a preposed conditional clause taken from a passage in a cook book introduces new' information because the information in the conditional clause does not relate to the preceding discourse in any way. The passage is titled *Süzme ve Kurulama* 'Draining and Drying' and it starts in the following way:

- (38) *Sıra-sıyla kendi-ler-i-ne mahsus kuru-la-ma bez-ler-i kullan-arak*  
 order-with own-PL-ACC-DAT reserved dry-VB-NOM towel-PL-ACC use-SIM

*kuru-la-diğ-iniz mutfak araç-lar-in-i, yer-ler-in-e yer-leştir-iniz.*  
 dry-VB-PAST-2pl kitchen utensil-PL-POSS.ACC place-PL-POSS-DAT place-CAUS-2pl

One after another, by using their own special tea towels, place the kitchen utensils which you have dried in their appropriate places.

- (39) *Ekonomik durum-un-uz yeterli ise, büyük küçük bulaşık*  
 economic situation-poss-2pl appropriate COND big small washing

*makinesi al-arak, bulaşık yıka-ma sorun-un-u-zu hallet-miş ol-ur-sunuz.*  
 machine buy-SIM dishes wash-VB problem-POSS-2sg solve-PAST be-AOR-2sg

If your financial situation is appropriate, by buying a small or big washing machine you will solve your problem of washing dishes. (Eryılmaz 1990: 57)

On the second conception of 'topic', adverbial clauses have been said to provide a framework for the subsequent main clause (section 1.6), a domain within which the main clause has to be understood. This account could easily be extended to a conception in which the subordinate clause is seen, in gestalt terms, as the ground against which the main clause is perceived as a figure (Reinhart 1984).

#### 2.4 Discourse scope of preposed adverbial clauses

Ramsay's (1987) statistical approach uncovers the fact that preposed adverbial clauses have a much wider discourse scope than their postposed counterparts. Preposed adverbial clauses need a large part of the preceding discourse for their interpretation, whereas most postposed adverbial clauses need only the immediately preceding clause i.e. their main clause. This is also in line with Chafe's (1984) findings which point to a stronger syntactic and intonational 'fusion between postposed adverbials and their main clauses than between preposed adverbial clauses and their main clauses. This can be seen in the following example:

- (40) *Buruk lezzet-i damağ-im-da ez-dim*  
 sour taste-ACC mouth-POSS-LOC chew-PAST

*mide-m-e yolla-yabil-mek için.*  
 stomach-1sgPOSS-DAT send-POT-GER to

So that I could send it to my stomach, I chewed the sour flavour in my mouth.

in which the postposed adverbial clause is bound in Chafe's (1984) terms because it is not separated from its main clause by an intonational break or pause. The wider scope of preposed adverbial clauses can be demonstrated if the adverbial clause in (40) is preposed as in:

- (41) *Mide-m-e yolla-yabil-mek için buruk lezzeti damağimda ezdim.*  
 I chewed the sour flavour in my mouth so that I could send it to my stomach.

Preposed adverbial clauses as opposed to postposed adverbial clauses, regulate and direct the flow of information in written texts. They provide an effective means of assisting the perception of discourse as a structured, and coherent whole (Bakker 1991:234). Depending on such factors as discourse type and the kind of adverbial clause under query, organization of discourse by means of adverbial clauses may take a number of different forms. In the following *purpose* clause (43) a problem is stated which is associated with the expectations of

the reader which the preceding discourse gives rise to. The following main clause in (43) then offers a solution to the stated problem. Thus preposed adverbial clauses, serve to ‘guide’ the attention of the reader by signalling how the reader is expected to associate the material following the purpose clause with the material preceding it’ (Thompson,1985:61).

(42) *Iç-er mis-in?*  
 drink-AOR Q-2sg  
 Would you like to drink?

(43) *Hayir de-mek için dudakl-ar-im-i ara-liyor-um,*  
 no say-INF in order to lip-PL-1sgPOSS-ACC open-PRES-1sg  
*ama damağ-im-da-ki karincalanma sözcük-ler-i tut-uyor.*  
 but mouth-1sgPOSS-LOC-REL tingling word-PL-ACC hold-PRES  
 I open my mouth in order to say no but the tingling in mouth holds back the words.  
 (Eroğlu 1983:49)

This example (43) is uttered by *a woman* who has a drinking problem. After being offered an alcoholic drink, she finds it very difficult to refuse. The reader is made aware of this problem because she was offered a drink by her companion in the preceding discourse, where she did not respond ( this has not been included here). The main clause offers a solution or the outcome of the problem which is subtly being implied in the preceding clause i.e. she is an alcoholic. It should also be noted that the saliency of the narrative is reflected in the syntax of the subordinate purpose clause, that is, the purpose clause contains the non-finite form of the verb (-mek), in this case, *deMEK* ‘to say’ in (43).

## 2.5 Text-organization of preposed conditional and purpose clauses

Procedural and expository texts, such as the cookery book and *a* book on how to care for *a* new-born child exhibited a significantly high number of conditional clauses as compared to other discourse genres such as narratives in the data (see Table 2).This can perhaps be explained by the fact that these clauses play a significant role in text-organization, arranging the discourse into significant units.

The term ‘procedural’ is applied to those discourse genres which give directions for carrying out a specific task (Grimes 1975). The difference between procedural texts and other discourse genres is perhaps manifested most clearly in the use of direct reference to the addressee in the procedural texts. Narratives and expository texts, constantly refer to third person and hardly any overt reference is made to the addressee while procedural texts show a constant reference to the addressee, i.e the second person plural in Turkish (which is also the polite form).

Preposed *conditional* clauses have a *recapitulative* function in procedural discourse. The repetition of the preceding clause organizes the discourse into meaningful units, thus aiding the learning process i.e:

‘Do A, if you can’t do A, do B etc.’

The following example taken from a cookery book illustrates this summarizing effect and the learning process is eased by instructing the reader to carry out a certain action as in (46), but not to ‘worry’ if this action cannot be carried out because an alternative solution is offered to the reader in the following preposed conditional clause.

(44) *Dairelerin kenarlarına araliki peynirleri koyunuz.*  
 Put the cheese inside the dough.

(45) *Hamurun kenarını peynirleri tamamen kapatacak şekilde örtünüz.*  
 Close the corners of the dough so as to completely cover the cheese.

(46) *Nemse kalibiyla hamurlari yarim dairelere kesiniz.*

With a biscuit cutter, cut the dough into half circles.

(47) *Eğer bu kalip yoksa, bardakla kesiniz.*

It you don't have this, cut (the dough into half circles) with a drinking glass.

(Eryilmaz 1989:301)

Preposed conditional clauses thus provide the frame for the following main clause and serve to 'help the dynamics of the sequencing of information' (Ramsay 1987:405). These types of construction serve to link the current preposed conditional clause to the preceding text by repeating or summarizing information already presented to the reader in the preceding text. This usage of subordinate adverbial clauses indicates a connection between thematic status and the method of development in a text described by Fries (1983). As in the example given above, when a preposed conditional clause is used to repeat or summarize prior text, there are typically cohesive chains (in the sense of Halliday and Hasan 1976); this cohesion is provided by the use of ellipsis, substitution, anaphoric reference, lexical repetition, and so on (Givon,1983). Thus the example (47), the *eğer bu kalip yoksa* 'if this biscuit cutter is not available' clause is elliptical, because it is stating an option and as a consequence there is a reduction in form which is also a well known correlate of topic accessibility (Givon 1983). This type of cohesion is also found in purpose clauses in which repeated information in the purpose clause has undergone ellipsis because of the preceding text (the elided material is enclosed in brackets):

(48) *Içer misin?*

Would you like a drink?

(49) *Hayir demek için dudaklarımı aralıyorum, ama damağımdaki karincalanma, sözcükleri tutu yor.*

I open my mouth to say 'no' ('I would not like a drink) but the tingling in my mouth is holding back the words.'

These findings, however, are not in line with Chafe's statement (1984:440) that 'adverbial clauses typically contain unfamiliar information' because the examples I have given above render the conditional and purpose clauses as 'given' or 'known' in the sense of repeating or summarizing information presented in the prior text. It is also interesting to note that although these adverbial clauses convey given information, for example, by the use of a deictic demonstrative such as *bu* 'this' in (47) in the adverbial clause thus rendering this as shared knowledge, they play an important function in reorienting the reader or listener by introducing 'new' information in the following clause (Mathiessen & Thompson 1988: 314).

### 2.5.1 Purpose Clauses

In my data, 94% of purpose clauses which were analyzed appear in initial position. Thompson (1984) draws the following conclusions to account for the high percentage of adverbial clauses in clause initial position: purpose clause in initial position present a framework within which the main clause can be interpreted. According to Thompson, (1985:162) initial purpose clauses have an important discourse function and play a role in an expectation frame:

'the text preceding the sentence containing an initial purpose clause creates the expectation of a certain aim.

Naming this aim in turn raises expectations about the means for reaching it. The text following the purpose clause provides these means. The following example illustrates this;

(50) *Osmanli Imparatorluğu dağılıyor ve yıkılmak üzere bulunuyordu.*

The Ottoman Empire was under attack and it was slowly falling apart.

(51) *Devleti bu güç durumdan kurtarmak için, çalışmalar yapıyordu.*

To save the state from this difficult situation, work was being done.

(Seler 1989:1 39)

Using Thompson's criteria, the purpose expression raises discourse expectations: the reader wants to hear more about the purpose. The mention of the purpose clause in (51) makes the reader expect some information about the question whether the aim will be reached or not. ('the aim will be reached because work was being done to save the state from this situation).

As was mentioned earlier for conditional clauses, preposed purpose adverbial clauses contain lexical material which is recapitulative, thus providing 'cohesion' in the sense of Halliday & Hasan (1976) with the preceding material. In example (51), the purpose clause contains material which has been mentioned in the preceding clause (50) 'that the state is in a difficult situation is in effect, a summary of the preceding clause that 'the Ottoman Empire was under attack and that it was slowly tailing apart.

## 2.6 Given/new information order in adverbial clauses

Despite difficulties in defining information status, and deciding upon the relationship between topic and information status, many scholars have proposed that the organization of a sentence follows a given to new (topic-comment) order in which speakers begin with the information assumed to be given and progress toward the information that is assumed to be new. For instance, Mathesius (1942) identified two basic elements of the sentence as the theme, the known from which the speaker departs, and the rheme, that which the speaker states about the theme. Firbas (1964) expanded upon the notion of the theme as that part of the sentence which forwards the discourse. Others, such as Halliday (1967), who argue for more finely differentiated information types, posit two underlying processes: the first which moves the speaker from old information (from the theme), and the other moving the hearer toward new information (toward the focus).

The given/new distinction offers a potentially important framework within which to explain language use and variation. Specifically, the given/new distinction proposes a functional explanation as to why speakers create and use alternative ways of saying the same thing, that is, for the existence of linguistic variables at syntactic and discourse levels (Schiffrin 1992:171).

What insights can the given/new order offer to an analysis of adverbial clauses? Given the observational universal that the unmarked form of conditional clause places the protasis before the apodosis, that is, *if X, Y*; and Comrie's claim (1986:83) that

'in some languages the protasis *must* precede the apodosis, in particular in languages with a rigid rule requiring the finite verb of the main clause to stand sentence finally, e.g Turkish,

then the given/new order denotes that the unmarked order of *if X, Y* is due to the *givenness* of X. However, as I will show below, the semantic meaning, the same non-factuality and the matching event dependency, can be conveyed with apodosis before protasis, that is, *Y, if X*. Thus, the given new/order suggests that speakers use the construction *Y, if X* also for reasons having to do with information status, that is, the givenness of Y and conceivably the newness of X (Schiffrin 1992:171). Consider the following example (54), in which the apodosis conveys given and the postposed conditional clause, the protasis, conveys focal information:

(52) *Yorgun-um, Murat kapı-yi aç-ıp kenar-a çekil-iyor.*  
tired-1sg Murat door-ACC open-SS corner-DAT go-PRES  
I'm tired, Murat opens the door and goes to the corner.

- (53) *O-nu dinle-yecek güc-üm yok.*  
 he-ACC listen-FUT strength-1sgPOSS there isn't  
 I don't have the strength to listen to him.  
 (I don't feel like listening to what he has to say.)

- (54) *Konuşma-ma-si için yalvar-sam.*  
 speech-NEG-2sgPOSS to beg-COND-1sg  
 (What would happen) if I asked him to stop talking. (Eroğlu 1983:9)

In example (54), the apodosis *konuşma-ma-si için* 'for him to stop talking' is given information because it is inferable from the preceding example (53) *onu dinleyecek güüm yok* 'I don't have the strength to listen to him' or translated better as 'I don't feel like listening to what he has to say'.

## 2.7 Haiman's definition of topic ignores the possibility that conditional clauses may have different information effects

Haiman's (1978) argument that conditionals are topics, however, ignores the possibility that conditional clauses may have a different information effect, that is, postposed conditional clauses may convey new information. Thus, Haiman effectively ignores the relationship between information status and sentence structure- an oversight even more surprising given his emphasis on givenness as criterial to topicality.

In sum, considering clause order in conditionals is critical to assessing their status as topics. If a protasis is a topic regardless of position (in *if X, V* and *Y, I(X)*, then this provides evidence that conditionals are topics - but then evidence is lost for the given/new information order. On the other hand, if a protasis is a topic only when it is preposed (in *if X, )'*, then we have further evidence for the given/new information order, but then one cannot make an argument for the proposal that all conditionals are topics (Ford & Thompson 1986; Ramsay 1987).

## 2.8 Summary

In this section, two issues were discussed bearing on the proposal that conditionals are topics. First is the role of givenness, in particular, whether an entity (or proposition) is a topic only if it is understood as given. Second is the relationship between the given/new information order and conditionals as topics, in particular, whether the topic role of *if* clauses is influenced by their sentence position.

## 3. Semantic function of comma punctuation: if or when or because?

In this section, I show that the absence of an intonation break, a comma, and the presence of one correlates with a difference in communicative intent. In fact, as the examples below illustrate, an intonation or punctuation break is crucial for the *type* of adverbial clause that the speaker or writer wants to convey in Turkish:

### With an intonation break (temporal)

- (55) *Dağ-dan in-ince, savaş-lar başla-di.*  
 mountain-ABL get down-when war-PL start-PAST  
 The wars started *when* we climbed down from the mountain.

### Without an intonation break (reason)

- (56) *Dağ-dan in-ince savaş-lar başla-di.*  
 mountain-ABL get down-because war-PL start-PAST  
 The wars started *because* of our coming down the mountain.

**With an intonation break (temporal)**

- (57) *Halit-i 1970 Kasim-in-dan beri gör-me-dği-im-i*  
Halit-ACC 1970 Kasim-POSS-DAT since see-NEG-REL-1SGPOSS-ACC  
*hatirla-yınca, sirtim-da-ki ürperti azal-iyor.*  
remember-when back-LOC-REL shiver decrease-PRES  
When I remember that I haven't seen Halit since the November of 1970, the shiver  
in my spine decreases.

Without an intonation break (reason)

- (58) *Halit-i 1970 Kasim-in-dan beri gör-me-diğ-im-i*  
Halit-ACC 1970 Kasim-POSS-DAT since see-NEG-REL-POSS  
*hatirla-yınca sirtim-da-ki ürperti azal-iyor.*  
remember-because back-LOC-REL shiver decrease-PRES  
The shiver in my spine decreases because of my remembering that I haven't seen  
Halit since the November of 1970. (Eroğlu 1983: 23)

**With an intonation break (temporal clause)**

- (59) *Sarhoş ol-unca, gel-ip günah çıkar-tir.*  
drunk be-when come-SS sin get out-MOD  
When he is drunk, he comes and confesses.

**Without an intonation break (conditional clause)**

- (60) *Sarhoç ol-unca gel-ip günah çıkar-tir.*  
drunk be-COND come-SS sin get out-MOD  
He comes and confesses if he is drunk. (Eroğlu 1983:22)

In examples (59) and (60), the presence or absence of a comma following the *olunca* clause 'when drunk' creates a distinction between when and 'if' clauses. Thompson & Longacre (1985) mention some Indonesian and certain languages of Papua Guinea make no difference between 'when-clauses' and 'if-clauses'. Vai, a Mande language of Liberia also uses the discontinuous *a-ee* as the conditional marker.

- (61) *A a na ee i-i a fe e-a.*  
he come you-FUT him see-FUT  
If he comes, you will see him; or When he comes, you will see him.  
(Thompson & Longacre 1985:193)

In English, the difference between when' and 'if' clauses is simply one of degree of expectability, and as the examples I have given above in (59) and (60) show that in Turkish this distinction may be coded through the use or disuse of a comma after the '*-Ince* clause'. Although the gerund suffix *-Ince* is specialized for temporal linkage (Slobin 1989), the additional nuance of stating a condition can be achieved by the absence of comma punctuation as in (60). Different definitions of *-Ince* 'when' have been given by grammarians. Underhill (1976:381) defines *-Ince* as 'as soon as' or with less urgency as 'when'; and Lewis (1967: 179) refines the temporal relation as 'action just prior to that of the main verb'. Given the close temporal relation between the two events in the *-Ince* and the main clause, it is not surprising that it is also possible for the gerund suffix *-Ince* to have a nuance of causal linkage (Slobin 1989:5). My findings entail that it is possible for the gerund suffix *-Ince* to have the causal relationship mentioned *only* in the absence of a comma following the *-Ince* clause, as I have demonstrated in examples (56) and (58). Thompson & Longacre (1985) also claim that some languages use the same subordinating morpheme to signal both a temporal and causal relationship. This is to be expected since two events which are mentioned together as being simultaneous or adjacent in time are often inferred to be

causally related (Thompson & Longacre 1985:181). They cite an example from Wappo, in which one subordinator is neutral between a time and a cause interpretation:

- (62) *Te sawo pa -ta-wen ah naleis-khi.*  
he(ACC) bread eat-PAST-when/because I (NOM) angry-NONFUTURE  
When/because he ate the bread, I got angry. (Thompson & Longacre 1985:182)

#### 4. Conclusion

In this paper I have shown that the notion of topic does not restrict itself to single nouns or noun phrases in Turkish. Moreover, the conditional marker *-(i)sE as well as* the temporal marker *-Ince* serve to topicalize noun phrases. As further evidence of this pragmatic function general characteristics of topic noun phrases put forward by Li and Thompson (1976) were applied to adverbial clauses.

Finally, a significant relationship between comma punctuation and meaning was exhibited. Not only can comma punctuation be used to create a semantic effect, as in indicating questions, but my analysis of adverbial clauses revealed that an absence or presence of a comma is so important in the Turkish language that it can make the difference between a temporal, reason and conditional clause.

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