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## Socially Deictic Use of a Body-part Term in Turkish

Mübeccel Taneri

Abstract: In this paper I analyze the use of a particular body part term in Turkish. The analysis is partly based on the work by Liston 1972. Furthermore, I demonstrate that this particular body part term appears frequently in usage with socially determined deictic meanings.

Body-part terms (herein after "BP terms") display prominent functions in terms of the following three criteria (Liston 1972:333):

- (1) they give rise to derived words,
- (2) they spawn idioms,
- (3) they appear in egressive polysemes, in other words, they are utilized outside their corporeal domains.

Liston provides some examples of BP terms with idiomatic usage based on a Serbo-Croatian English dictionary. For instance oko 'eye' occurs in 30 idioms (Liston 1972:334):

čuvati nešto kao zjenica svog oka

Literally, "to watch over something like the pupil of one's eye," and it means "to watch over the most important thing."

Some of the usages of BP terms in other domains in Serbo-Croatian include the following:

kapak	eyelid	lid (on a bottle)
oko	eye	eye (of a needle)
nos	nose	nozzle

The implication inferred from the above is that BP terms with the largest functional load occupy the highest level in the usage hierarchy. Their grammatical load is defined in terms of the above criteria.

In Turkish we also find a large number of lexical items derived from BP terms with some formative suffixes, such as -lE, -lI, and -sIz.<sup>1</sup> There are also expressions which incorporate BP terms and their derivative forms.

In this paper I will demonstrate that one particular BP term, baş 'head', has a significantly large number of derivations, especially with social deictic meanings.

The following procedures will be followed in the analysis of this term:

1. With respect to the formative suffix -lE, which derives verbs from nouns and adjectives, BP terms will be classified into two groups on the basis of frequency of their usage. If the derived verbs appear in more speech situations, they will be identified as unmarked. The marked category will represent those derived verbs whose usage is governed by some constraints in terms of speech situations.

The unmarked BP terms will be tested further by whether or not they (1) give rise to more derived words, (2) spawn more idioms and, (3) extend to the use outside their corporeal domains, e.g., social and topographical phenomena. Finally, some of their usages which call for a different approach to meaning will be discussed.

1.1. The suffix -lE, which is a highly productive one, derives verbs (mostly transitive) from nouns and adjectives illustrated as below:

temiz: adj. clean	-	temiz-le: v. to clean
baa: n. a string, cord etc. used to tie things	-	baa-la: v. to tie
taş: n. stone	-	taş-la: v. to throw stones
tuz: n. salt	-	tuz-la: v. to put salt on
paket: n. package	-	paket-le: v. to wrap to make a package

The above derivatives have a meaning based on (1) one of the inherent functions of the noun from which they derive, in the case of baa-la 'to tie' or tuz-la 'to put salt on', (2) the action whose end result is the

quality the adjective describes or the referent the noun stands for, in the case of temiz-le 'to clean' or paket-le 'to wrap up an item into a package' respectively. More examples of each type are given in the Appendix.

Similarly, almost all of the BP terms, (although not the compounded ones such as göz kapalı 'eyelid', function as verbs with the above mentioned verb formative. Although there is a change in their grammatical category, the semantic content is basically retained with the exception of only one BP term which will be discussed below. The usage of almost all of the derived verbs is governed by extra linguistic factors such as formality. Among the derivative verbs that appear in the sentences (a) below, baş-la 'to start, to begin' does not have any restrictions on its usage with respect to formality. Göüs-le, with its metaphoric usage 'face difficulty', can also appear both in formal and informal speech situations just like baş-la. The rest must have their (b) constructions in formal usage.

Regarding formality, I am mainly taking the speech of news announcers on TRT (Turkish Radio and Television) as the criterion for the concept of formal speech. The other criterion is the usage of language observed in official documents. The forms sub-grouped as (a) in the following sentences appear in informal speech situations. The alternative phrases in (b), however, will have to be utilized in formal speech situations. The following illustrate the point:

1. (a) baş-la : v. to start, to begin  
head-der suff
- (b) baş-la : v. to start, to begin  
head-der suff
2. (a) göüs-le :  
chest-der suff
- v. i. to obstruct a moving object (i.e. a ball) with the chest, ii. to face with the difficulties, endure hardship
- (b) göüs-ün-le yakala/karşıla  
chest-poss 2sg-instr-der suff catch/meet
- 'catch/obstruct s.t. with chest'

3. (a) omuz-la: v. to put on your shoulder  
shoulder-der suff
- (b) omuz-un-a al  
shoulder-poss 2sg-to put  
'to put on your shoulder'
4. (a) diš-le: v. bite  
tooth-der suff
- (b) diš-in-le kopar  
tooth-poss 2sg-instr detach  
'to detach s.t. with your teeth'
5. (a) tirnak-la: v. scratch (with nail)  
nail-der suff
- (b) tirnak-in-la kopar  
nail-poss 2sg-instr detach  
'to detach s.t. with nail'
6. (a) parmak-la: v. get into with your finger  
finger-der suff
- (b) parma-in-la al  
finger-poss 2sg-instr get  
'to get into s.t. with your finger'
7. (a) dirsek-le: v. to nudge  
elbow-der suff
- (b) dirse-in-le dey  
elbow-poss 2sg-instr touch  
'to touch s.t. with your elbow'
8. (a) ayak-la: v. to smash with feet  
feet-der suff
- (b) aya-in-la ez  
feet-poss 2sg-instr smash  
'to smash with your feet'

It seems that in formal speech situations BP terms are rarely used. The context, for instance, in which the expressions in Nos 3 and 7 (b) above are likely to be

heard, is a dance hall where the instructor may utter the followings:

1. eř-in-i    omuz-un-a  
partner-2sg poss-direct obj shoulder-2sg poss

al  
take

'Put your partner on your shoulder.'

2. eř-in-e    dirsek-in-le                          dey  
partner-poss-acc elbow-2sg poss-with touch

'Touch your partner slightly with your elbow.'

One of the characteristics of the derivative baş-la 'to begin', when compared with similar derivatives, is that the speaker thinks of no association between the BP term baş 'head' and its derived form başla 'to begin'. When the consultants used for this project were asked about a possible relationship, they all stated except one who has some knowledge of linguistics that the apparent similarity between them is just accidental. It seems that what had started as a metaphor has become an arbitrary relation between the form baş-la 'to begin' and the referent the form baş 'head' stands for.<sup>2</sup> This is not the case with the other BP terms and their derivative verb forms subgrouped as (a) above which do not call for any metaphoric interpretation with the exception of göüsle 'to face difficulties.'

The above observations establish the status of baş 'head' as the most unmarked BP term with the largest functional load in usage.

The suffixes -sIz, and -lI derive adjectives from nouns as follows:

1. (a) ayak-lî: adj. with legs, as in:

bir ayak-lî      adam  
one foot-with man

'a one-footed man'

- (b) ayak-siz: adj. with no legs, as in:

ayak-siz      kadın  
foot-without woman

'a woman with no legs'

2. (a) baş-lî: adj. i. with head, ii. with a knob, iii. in

'belli başlî' well known, as in:

(i) iki baş-lî     janavar  
two head-with monster

'a monster with two heads'

(ii) baş-lî     sopa  
head-with stick

'a stick with a knob'

(iii) belli baş-lî kişi  
well known     person

'a notable person'

(b) baş-siz: adj. i. without a head, ii. without a leader, as in:

(i) baş-siz     jeset  
head-without corpse

'a corpse with no head'

(ii) baş-siz     ulus  
head-without nation

'a nation with no leader'

All BP terms can appear with these two suffixes and the derived adjectives are descriptive with respect to having or not having the quality that the noun stands for. Some formatives, however, do not appear with all BP terms. For instance -lık, which derives nouns from nouns, does not occur with many BP terms. Frequently, the derivatives with this suffix carry the semantic content which indicates that the referent of the new form is an instrument with a specific function in relation to the given organ. The following illustrate the point:

1. göz-lük: n. glasses  
eye-der suff

2. diz-lik: n. knee-pad



knee-der suff

3. kulak-lik: n. hearing aids  
ear-der suff

4. aiz-lik: n. pipe  
mouth-der suff

5. bař-lik: n. i. helmet, ii. cowl, iii. bridle,  
iv. title of a book, v. heading of an article,  
vi. (in parts of Anatolia) bride price

As observed in the above examples, only the term bař 'head' has more semantic extensions than the rest.

In addition to the above usages, bař occurs also in more grammatical classes than the others. The following expressions function as adverbs whereas almost no other BP terms occur in this grammatical category.

bař-tan bař-a: adv. completely  
head-from head-to

bař-tan ařai / bař-tan yukari : adv. completely  
head-from bottom / head-from top

bař bař-a :  
head head-to

adv. together, tête-à-tête, face to face;  
confidentially

2. H. C. Hony's Turkish-English dictionary (1947) provides about a hundred entries for bař. This outnumbers the number of entries for all of the other BP terms except göz 'eye', which has as many entries as bař. Among all these entries, very few seem to be obsolete, while some other expressions and proverbs, with which I am familiar, are not recorded in the dictionary, some of which may be considered to be regional.

2.1. I will first discuss some proverbs with the term bař. Proverbs are generally used more in rural areas where traditional values are relatively persistent (Hayes 1987). When formality is not required, however, proverbs appear in every layer of the social structure for advice and guidance as well as for making a point more succinctly. Because of the striking effect a proverb can produce, it would not be out of place to find some of them in some speech situations which are classified as formal in terms of one of the criteria mentioned

above, namely the use of language in official documents. The following expression, for instance, is often seen as a written warning for people to keep forests unharmed:

yaş kesen                      baş keser  
wet cut-adj.cl.mark. head cut-aorist

'The one who cuts down a tree is just like the one who murders a man.'

For the following to be used properly, however, informal social settings are required:

- akıl-siz              baş-ın  
brain-without head-gen

jeza-si-ni  
punishment-poss 3sg-dirt. obj

ayak çek-er  
foot endure-aorist

'It is the feet that endure the inconvenience that a brainless head causes.'

- baş ol da,              soan baş-ı              ol  
head be somehow onion head-comp.suff-be

'Be a leader, no matter how unimportant it may seem to you.'

- akıl-a      gel-me-yen                      baş-a  
mind-to come-neg-adj.cl.marker head-to

gel-ir  
come-aorist

'What may not occur to you may happen to you.'

2.2. Apart from the proverbs mentioned above, there are verbs whose primary semantic content assume metaphorical usage when they are compounded with baş. The following provide examples:

baş kaldır- : v. to revolt  
head to raise

- hükumete başkaldıran kabile liderleri bir bayrak  
government revolting tribe leaders a flag

altında toplandı  
under united

'The chiefs of the tribes that revolted against the government united under one flag'

baş çek- : v. to take the lead, to guide  
head to pull

baş-i çek-en kim  
head-def pull-adj cl mark who

'Who is leading?'

baş-tan çık- : v.  
head-from get out

'to throw off restraint, to get out of control, to be led astray'

çojuu baş-tan çıkarma  
child-obj head-from be let astray

'do not cause the child to go astray'

2.3. Baş can be used in different constructions to indicate social ranks, specific points in both settled areas and in the area of residence. The following are some compound nouns indicating higher social status in the professional area signalled by the second part of the compound:

başbakan: n. the prime minister

başçavuş: n. sergent-major

başkan: n. president, chairman

başk'atip: n. first secretary, chief clerk

başkumandan: n. comander-in-chief

baş muharrir: n. editor-in-chief

baş murakib: n. controller-in-chief (financial)

başö:retmen: n. head master

There are no expressions, concerning BP terms, which refer to the opposite end of the social ranks, such as 'foot soldier'. The term 'foot', however, does

appear in grammatical constructions, but only with derogatory connotations.

With respect to residential areas the following show either a relative status or a specific area:

1. baş-kent: n. capital (of a country)  
head-city
2. köşe baş-ı: n. the corner (of a street)  
corner head-comp.suff
3. ojak baş-ı: n. by the hearth, by the fire  
hearth head-comp.suff
4. yol başı: n. the cross road  
road head-comp.suff
5. baş uş-u-nda: at the side of the bed  
head end-comp.suff-loc
6. havuz baş-ı: n. the pool and its surroundings<sup>3</sup>  
pool head-comp.suff

In most expressions, the deictic use of baş indicates 'top, starting point, beginning'. There are expressions, however, which challenge this observation, as these require further thinking. Observe the expressions:

1. alt baş / üst baş  
bottom head / top head
2. (a) tahta-nın üst baş-ı 'the top of the board'  
board-gen. top head-poss  
  
(b) tahta-nın alt baş-ı  
board-gen. bottom head-poss 3sg  
  
'the bottom of the board'
3. (a) oda-nın üst baş-ı  
room-gen. top head-poss 3sg  
  
'the part of the room opposite to the door'  
  
(b) oda-nın alt baş-ı  
room-gen. bottom head-poss 3sg  
  
'the part of the room with close proximity to the door'

It is quite reasonable to think that the referents of some spatial terms, i.e., oda 'room', karatahta 'blackboard', and sayfa 'a leaf of a book', are visualized in the shape of a head with sub-divisions as "lower" and "upper head" in the minds of the speakers.<sup>4</sup> Therefore, there is no conflict in the semantic content in the following:

sayfa-nin          üst baş-ı  
leaf-gen 3 sg top head-poss 3 sg

'the top of the page'

sayfa-nin alt      baş-ı  
leaf-poss bottom head-gen

'the lower part of the page'

In addition to the above different senses of baş, when antonym is involved, the term baş displays variability on the scale of collocational range as well. Its sense association differs depending on what combination of linguistic units it appears with. For example baş with the sense of enclosure appears as üst baş versus alt baş as discussed above while some other usages show different collocations as the following:

roman-nin          baş-ı  
novel-gen 3sg head-poss

'the beginning of the novel'

roman-ın          son-u  
novel-gen 3sg end-poss 3sg

'the end of the novel'

çay-ın              baş-ı  
stream-gen 3sg head-poss

'the source of the stream'

çay-ın              aya-ı  
stream-gen foot-poss

'the lower end of the stream or the impure parts of it'

The topographically extended usage of baş 'head' is as follows:

1. su baš-i: n. at the fountain (spring or body of water)
2. göl baš-i: n. the shore of a lake with foliage where people prefer to get some rest
3. yar baš-i: n. top of a cliff
4. da: baš-i: n. i. the top of a mountain, ii. away from one's hometown and immediate family
5. a:j baš-i: n. top of a tree
6. tarla baš-i: n. the part of a field with some saliency such as a tent or foliage

3. Some expressions demand different explanations of meaning whose scope encompass, among others, communicative intentions. With words, several purposes are achieved. Utterances have the power to state "who we are and what we hope our interlocutors know" (Rosaldo 1982:204).

1. baš üst-ü-ne                    'I will'  
head top-poss-dat

One of the categories of illocutionary acts is known as *commissives* (Bach and Harnish 1979). By uttering the above expression, the speaker performs an act of acknowledging a given order with the implication that it will be promptly carried out. For the act to be proper, the order must necessarily be uttered by someone with a higher rank or executive power in an institution. The same response to an order may be used as a sarcastic remark if the relevant felicity conditions are not fulfilled.

Similarly, but quite different in some respects, a promise about caring for someone and most likely providing for him moneywise is assumed with the following expression:

2. baš-im-in                    üst-ü-nde    yer-in  
head-gen 1sg-gen 3sg top-poss-on place-poss 2sg

var  
there is

Literally, 'you have your place on top of my head'

The social setting is quite different from that for sentence 1 above. No formality of any sort originating

from rank or power difference in a social structure is involved. Rather an informal, unpretentious promise is assumed in a humble manner. The hearer might be an in-law who has just lost his spouse and has been engulfed with grief or a young mother with three or four children, whose husband has just died in a tragic accident leaving them practically at the mercy of anyone. It is quite possible for anyone in the community to assume the benefactor role. However, the expression under discussion cannot be properly used by a total stranger but can be by the members of the family circle, relatives or very close friends.

Some expressions reflect conventions precisely and effectively. A certain social situation is formally observed with their usages. For instance, the following are the ones seen in obituary columns, on sympathy cards or when they are delivered personally to perform the act of expressing condolence:

(a) kal-an-lar-a baş  
survive-adj cl mark pl-indir.obj. head

sa:lık-i diler-iz  
health-dir.obj. wish-1pl

'We wish health to the heads of those survived'

(b) baş-ınız sa: olsun  
head-2pl healthy be

'May your head be healthy.'

On those days, when one would have to spend hours, and in some cases days, in reaching his destination, what was said as a response to a question within greetings, which is highly cultural-bound, is now jokingly proclaimed to insinuate an indirect request. It may well be the case, however, that in rural areas this speech situation is still alive. The following brief conversation illustrates the point:

Host: aç-mi-sin, susuz-mu-sun,  
hungry-ques-2sg thirsty-ques-2sg

uykusuz-mu-sun  
sleepy-ques-2sg

'Are you hungry, thirsty or sleepy?'

Guest: göl baş-i-nda uyu-du-m  
 lake head-comp.suff-loc sleep-past-1sg  
 gel-di-m  
 come-past-1sg  
 'Before coming here, I slept by the lake.'

On the above, the guest, by leaving out the part of the requested information (concerning the state of being hungry), leaves the host to figure out the unspoken intention, who in turn would ask the hostess to serve their guest some food.

baş-im-a gel-en-ler-i  
 head-poss 1sg-indirt.obj come-adj.cl.mark-pl-obj  
 duy-du-n-mu  
 hear-past-2sg-ques

'Have you heard what has happened to me?'

The above utterance is meant to instigate the beginning of a conversation. However, if we imagine a context in which the hearer can not afford for such an interaction to take place, say in an office where the hearer is obliged to get a particular job done, he might indirectly refuse to listen to his co-worker, stating an excuse such as the following:

üzgün-üm ne ol-du  
 sorry-1sg what happen-past  
 diy-e-mi-yecek-im  
 say-ability-neg-future-1sg

'I am sorry I cannot ask what happened to you.'

baş-im-da şimdi bu iş var  
 head-poss 1sg-loc now this work there is

'I have this work to do right now.'

If the above assumption about the speech setting is a fact, the failure to cooperate to initiate a conversation would not be taken as an offense. Even though performatives are utterances in which saying something is equal to doing something, the illocutionary act has to be interpreted according to the context in which it is performed (Souza Filho 1984:100). Therefore, the refusal to initiate a conversation can be taken, in some cases, as a request for help.



4. Conclusion: After finding that the BP term baş carries the largest functional load in the usage of the language in general, I have presented some of the expressions that it gives rise to. Possible different interpretations of the use of some of these expressions have been investigated. This brief examination supports the assumption that, for the speakers of Turkish, the BP term baş has some cultural significance although probably it is not unique with this language. One thing that is certain is that the usages illustrated in this paper show cultural facts and the social structure of the society. Some of the expressions assume certain meanings in accordance with the context they are used in, and thus in this sense, they are regarded as deictic.

#### NOTES

1

Due to the rules for the vowel harmony in Turkish, morphemes display variations whose underlying representations are generally symbolized in the literature with the usage of capitalization for the vowel segment.

2

baş has an entry as a BP term in an etymological dictionary (Clauson 1972:375). So is baş-la as a derived verb from baş with the semantic content 'to begin to lead' (381).

3

A pool, usually in a summer residence, has two-fold significance: (i) with running water in the form of a fountain, it supplies water for farming, (ii) in summer, it serves as a place where social gatherings are conducted.

4

I am indebted to my Prof. Akira Yamamoto, whose insightful explanation has resolved this apparently conflicting usage.

## APPENDIX

## Nouns as the stem:

- kök: n. root, -le: v. tr. to root out  
 zehir: n. poison, -le: v. tr. to poison  
 kapak: n. lid, -la: v. tr. to put the lid on  
 bıçak: n. knife, -la: v. tr. to stab  
 iine: n. pin, needle, -le: v. tr. to pin down  
 çivi: n. nail, -le: v. tr. to nail  
 zamk: n. glue, -la: v. tr. to glue  
 ütü: n. iron, -le: v. tr. to iron  
 çapa: n. hoe, -la: v. tr. to hoe  
 su: n. water, -la: v. tr. to water  
 yaa: n. oil, -la: v. tr. to oil  
 yara: n. wound, -la: v. tr. to wound  
 topal: n. a lame, -la: v. intr. to lame  
 kundak: n. a bundle, -la: v. tr. to bundle  
 kutu: n. a box, -la: v. tr. to put in a box  
 tembih: n. warning, -la: v. tr. to warn  
 sol: n. left, -la: v. tr. take over from left  
 karşı: n. opposite, la: v. tr. to meet  
 yol: n. road, way, -la: v. tr. to send  
 çözüm: n. solution, -le: v. tr. to solve  
 kuçak: n. lap, -la: v. tr. to embrace  
 tapu: n. the official registered form of a property  
       -la: v. tr. to register property into s.o's name  
 yük: n. load, -le: v. tr. to load

## Adjectives as the stem:

zor: adj. difficult, -la: v. tr. to exercise force or  
effort on s.o. or s.t.

açık: adj. open, -la: v. tr. to clarify

hafif: adj. light, -le: v. intr. to be relieved

keskin: adj. sharp, -le: v. tr. to sharpen

serin: adj. cool, -le: v. intr. to cool off

zayıf: adj. thin, slim, -la: v. intr. to lose weight

şişman: adj. fat, -la: v. intr. to put on weight

kuru: adj. dry, -la: v. tr. to dry

kara: n. black, -la: v. tr. (1) to cross out, (2) to  
vilify/defame

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