

The Emphatic Marker in Turkish: Two Readings

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Abstract. This paper aims to show that the anaphor *kendi* in Turkish (i) functions as an emphatic marker as well as a reflexive, and (ii) that the emphatic marker *kendi* has two distinct readings, which hasn't been noted in the previous literature. Using diagnostic tests from Ahn (2010), I argue that the distinct readings of the emphatic marker *kendi* arise from occupying different sentential positions: one directly modifying a DP, and the other modifying the VP. Moreover, I show that the event modifying effects of the emphatic marker *kendi* differ from its English counterpart in terms of (i) the thematic roles allowed for the co-referents of the VP-modifying variety, and (ii) lack of obligatory stress on the DP-modifying variety. In addition, I document further nuances regarding the morphological varieties of the emphatic marker in Turkish.

Keywords. emphatic marker, emphatic anaphora, anaphora, event modification, reflexive, contrastive focus, contrastive topic

1. Introduction. Anaphoric items (i.e. items that require a co-referent to have referential content), are widely studied in relation to dependency phenomena like reflexivity (*compare* 1a-b). Reflexives interact with the argument structure and saturate A positions (Faltz 2016, Büring 2005).¹ However, the same anaphors in some languages also mark a relation that does not alter the argument structure while still maintaining a co-referential relationship with an argument (Dechaume & Wiltschko 2017 i.a.). In this paper, I will focus on one such function: *emphatic marking* (2a-b):

- (1) a. I_i saw myself_i in the reflection.
b. *I_i saw herself_i in the reflection.
- (2) a. The manager_i himself_i listened to our complaints.
b. I_i went through all the legal processes myself_i.

The anaphor *kendi* in Turkish also has both reflexive and emphatic functions (3):²

- (3) a. Doktor_i yanlışlıkla **kendi(-si)-ni** ara-dı (reflexive)
doctor.nom by.mistake **self(-3sg)-acc** all-past-3sg
“The doctor called herself by mistake.” (Interpretation: He dialed his own number.)
- b. Doktor(-un)_i **kendi(-si)**_i bütün hasta-lar-ı tek tek ara-dı. (emphatic)
doctor(-gen)_i **self(-3sg)**_i all patient-pl-acc one.by.one call-past-3sg
“The doctor herself called all the patients one by one.”

¹In the case of logophors, the anaphor may not even saturate an A position:

(i) John_i was furious. The picture of himself_i in the museum had been mutilated. Büring (2005:226)
See Büring 2005 for a more detailed description.

²Sometimes also given as *kendi-si*. What exactly {-sI} marks in Turkish is an ongoing debate. Some consider it a compound marker, while some considers it possessive marking for 3rd person. For different perspectives see Göksel 1989, 1993; Göksel & Haznedar 2007 i.a. Also note that *kendi* obligatorily marks person, can mark number/plurality, but doesn't mark gender as Turkish does not have gender marking. Number/plurality marking on the 3rd person in Turkish is optional at first sight, though there are some restrictions based on interactions with animacy and locality. See Sezer 1978, Göksel & Kerslake 2005; Özsoy 2009; Bamyacı & Häussler 2014, Krause & von Heusinger 2019, i.a. for more detailed discussion on number and plurality marking on the 3rd person in Turkish.

add that the third person pronoun in Turkish has been debated on a great deal in terms of its pronominal properties, or lack thereof, due to lacking overt person agreement morphology, in addition to also being a demonstrative unlike 1st and 2nd person pronouns in Turkish (see Harley & Ritter 2002 i.a. for a more detailed discussion).

The morphosyntactic observations brought up in this section so far suggest that the EK might be displaying features of different syntactic categories when in different sentential positions. Surfacing as two different syntactic categories with the two different interpretations suggests having different merge sites. However, it still requires further investigation to determine whether the two readings stem from two separate semantic entries for two separate syntactic categories that morpho-phonologically overlap, or whether the EK is a single semantic entry that works differently in different syntactic environments. If the EK consists of one single formal semantic entry, then this could be accounted for by the merge site leading to different applications of the same function, resulting in different but semantically related interpretations. In that case, accounting for the EK would have larger consequences for the sentential derivation process, suggesting that syntactic category is determined by the merge site, rather than being an inherent property of the lexical item that the verb selects for, as proposed by theories such as Distributed Morphology (Halle & Marantz 1994 and on).

Another curious thing is that the genitive marking on the _{DP}EM seems to interact with animacy, or with agentivity as a greater concept that entails animacy. Göksel & Kerslake (2005:238) already show that _{VP}EK can have an inanimate co-reference (24a). This is also true for the _{DP}EM (24b). However, (24c) shows that the lack of genitive marking on the co-referent of the _{DP}EM leads to a significant decrease in grammaticality in (24a) where its co-referent is inanimate, but this is not an asymmetry we observe with animate (human or non-human) co-referents (20)⁶:

- (24) a. Bu ütü-ler bir süre sonra kendi **kendi(-leri)-ne** kapan-ıyor.
 these iron-pl a while later self **self(-pl)-dat** close-prog-3sg
“These irons switch themselves off after a while.”

Göksel & Kerslake (2005:238)

- b. Kapı-nın **kendi(-si)** sağlam ama kilid-i bozuk.
 door-gen **self** intact but lock-poss.3sg broken
“The door itself is intact, but its lock is broken.”

- c. ??Kapı **kendi** sağlam ama kilid-i bozuk.
 door **self** intact but lock-poss.3sg broken
“The door itself is intact, but its lock is broken.”

Number marking and agreement is documented to interact with animacy to some degree in Turkish (see Sezer 1978, Göksel & Kerslake 2005; Özsoy 2009; Bamyacı & Häussler 2014, Krause & von Heusinger 2019), which makes it not unlikely that (22) is a case of morphology interacting with animacy.

3.Preliminary discussion of what exactly the EK might be marking semantically and pragmatically. What exactly the two EMs mark is at the center of the discussion in Ahn (2010). Following (Rooth 1996, Eckardt 2001), he leans on a contrastive focus-like explanation for the semantic function of the _{DP}EM, and a volition introducer/licenser type of account for the _{VP}EM.

⁶ The discussion in Section 3 elaborates on the variety of the EK in (23a).

While a detailed discussion regarding the exact formal semantic function of the EK varieties is beyond the scope of this paper. In Section 3.1, I attempt to lay out the specific contexts with which the $_{DP}EK$, and the $_{VP}EK$ are compatible, and/or which contexts seem to trigger or require them to connect to their formal semantic functions. As for Section 3.2. I attempt to single out the different possible interpretations that each version of the EK allows or doesn't allow.

3.1. CONTEXTS COMPATIBLE WITH $_{DP}EK$. We've already seen that the $_{DPEM}$ requires some type of contrast and can trigger it by itself out of the blue within the limitations of the addressee's world knowledge (Eckardt 2001, Ahn 2010). It is also analyzed as some type of contrastive focus marker (Ahn 2010: 26-36). Similarly, EK could also be compatible with marking contrastive topic given that it often happens to be within the sentence initial phrase either as a part of the subject phrase, or as a part of the object phrase in a subject-drop environment (see İşsever 2003 for the sentential positions of information structural units in Turkish). I observe three main relations that it forms regardless of morphological marking, and regardless of the thematic role of its co-referent. The first one is triggering contrast between a whole and its parts

(25) *whole-part relation*

Pasta(-nın)	kendi(-si)	düzgün de	krema-sı	bozul-muş.
cake(-gen)	self(-3sg)	proper foc	frosting-poss.3sg	get.messy-evid-3sg.

"The cake itself is decent but its frosting is messed up."

Another contrast-building relation that keeps surfacing with the $_{DP}EK$ is perceived hierarchies, where it accentuates what's usually perceived as the highest end of said hierarchy (26):

(26) *perceived hierarchy/importance*

a.Müdür(-ün)	kendi(-si)	şikayet-imiz-le	ilgilen-di,
manager-gen	self(-3sg)	complaint-poss.1pl-with	deal.with-past-3sg

müşteri hizmetleri-ne bırak-ma-dı-Ø.
customer services-acc leave-neg-past-3sg
"The manager herself dealt with our complaint, (she) didn't leave (it) to the customer service."

b.Doktor(-un)	kendi(-si)	yok	mu?
Doctor(-gen)	self(-3sg)	exist.neg	Q?

Hemşire soru-m-un cevap-ı-nı bil-me-z.
Nurse.nom question-poss.1sg-gen answer-poss.3sg know-neg-aor-3sg.
"Isn't the doctor herself here? The nurse wouldn't know the answer to my question."

The third type of contrast that I observe with the $_{DP}EK$ is singling out a participant among two or more, but differently from (26), not based on a perceived hierarchy but based on difference or incomparability (27):

(27) A: Yarın eş-im-le birlikte Ankara'ya gid iyor-uz.
tomorrow spouse-poss.1sg-with together Ankara-dat go-prog-1pl
"Tomorrow we're going to Ankara with my spouse."

B: Ben sen **kendi-n** Ankara-ya gid-ecek-sin,
I you **self-2sg** Ankara-dat go-fut-2sg,

o İzmir-de kal-acak san-ıyör-du-m.
 he İzmir-loc stay-fut think-prog-past-1sg
"I thought you yourself were going to Ankara (as in only you, alone) and he was going to stay in İzmir."

Overall, (25)-(27) suggest that the _{DP}EK creates or marks some type of contrast by highlighting an event participant among other potential participants, which is also in line with (Eckardt 2001) whose analysis of centrality effects aren't restricted to alternate doers like Ahn (2010) implies, but they are discussed as alternate event participants, to unite _{DP}EMs and _{VP}EMs under the same core semantic function.

3.2. TEASING APART THE MANY FACES OF _{VP}EK:

In the literature there seems to be less emphasis put on pinpointing what exactly the _{VP}EM expresses, and it's often simply paraphrased as *without help* or *alone*. Ahn (2010) notes that the interpretation of the _{VP}EM in English is also often difficult to tease apart from its close variants *by xself* and *all by xself*, both of which can also be paraphrased as *without help* or *alone*, however hee also argues that the semantic contribution of the _{VP}EM in English isn't limited to those two interpretations. He suggests that _{VP}EM is in fact something that has to do with volition, and the co-referent of the _{VP}EM needs to be not just a causer but a volitional one in terms of its thematic role (Ahn 2010: 24-72). In Section 2.1., I showed that this is not the case with the _{VP}EK in Turkish (16, 17). We will return to that discussion at the end of this section. But before we do that, I will introduce two variants of the _{VP}EK: *kendi kendine* and *kendi başına*, which I will argue correspond exactly to the two interpretations *alone* and *without help*, respectively. However, just like their counterparts in English, both also seem to be compatible with a lot of the same contexts, and denote meanings that are difficult to tell apart (28):

- (28) a. Defne okul-a **kendi baş-ı-na** yürü-yör.
 Defne school-dat **self head-poss.3sg-dat** walk-prog-3sg
"Defne walks to school (all) by herself."
- b. Defne okul-a **kendi kendi-n-e** yürü-yör.
 Defne school-dat **self self-3sg-acc** walk-prog-3sg
"Defne walks to school (all) by herself."

Both are only available as _{VP}EKS (29)⁷:

- (29) a.*Defne-nin **kendi baş-ı** okul-a yürü-yör.
 Defne-gen **self head-poss.3sg** school-dat walk-prog-3sg
"Defne walks to school by herself."

⁷ *Kendi kendine* can also function as a reflexive as also noted by Kornfilt (1997):

(iii) (Siz) **kendi kendi-niz-i** tenkit et-me-yin.
 (2sg) **2pl-acc** critique do-neg-imp.2pl
"Don't criticize yourselves (yourselves)."

Kornfilt (1997:139)

However, *kendi başına* cannot:

(iv) #Siz hep **kendi baş-ımız-ı** eleştir-iyor-sunuz.
 you always **self head-poss.2pl-acc** criticize-prog.2pl
 Intended interpretation: *"You're always criticizing yourselves."*
 Literal interpretation: *"You're always criticizing your own heads"*

(iv) is well-formed, but the morphological components of *kendi başına* gets interpreted literally in a reflexive structure, straying away from its stand-alone meaning that is more metaphorical.

b.*Defne-nin **kendi kendi-si** okul yürü-yor.
 Defne-gen **self self-3sg-acc** walk-prog-3sg
 “Defne walks to school all by herself.”

(28) and (29) in comparison tells us that *kendi baş-I* and *kendi kendi(-sI)* are strictly adverbial in nature, unlike the EK which they derive from, which behaves like a nominal item when a _{DP}EK. However, it is possible to isolate the interpretations *alone*, and *without help*:

(30) Context A: Deniz recently learnt how to cook. He’s cooking a recipe while the rest of the household is hanging out in the kitchen. Everyone’s on their phones, so nobody is helping him.

Deniz mutfak-ta **kendi(-si)/kendi kendi(-si)-n** /#kendi baş-ı-na
 Deniz kitchen-loc **self(-3sg)/kendi kendi(-3sg)-dat**/#kendi head-poss.3sg-dat
 yemek pişir-iyor.
 food cook-prog-3sg.

“Deniz is cooking (by) *himself*/#all by *himself*_{ALONE}/all by *himself*_{WITHOUT.HELP}.”

(32) Context B: Deniz recently learnt how to cook. Ever since, he really likes cooking different recipes to try them out. He’s cooking a new recipe early in the morning while the rest of the household isn’t awake yet.

Deniz mutfak-ta **kendi(-si)/kendi kendi(-si)-n** /kendi baş-ı-na
 Deniz kitchen-loc **self(-3sg)/kendi kendi(-3sg)-dat**/kendi head-poss.3sg-dat
 yemek pişir-iyor.
 food cook-prog-3sg.

“Deniz is cooking (by) *himself*/all by *himself*_{ALONE}/all by *himself*_{WITHOUT.HELP}.”

(32) Context C: Deniz recently learnt how to cook, but he sometimes gets confused and needs some help with what to do with certain ingredients. He’s home alone cooking, but he really needed help with this one recipe, so he texted his sister. She’s texting back helping him with the instructions.

Deniz mutfak-ta **kendi(-si)/kendi kendi(-si)-ne** /?#kendi baş-ı-na
 Deniz kitchen-loc **self(-3sg)/kendi kendi(-3sg)-dat**/kendi head-poss.3sg-dat
 yemek pişir-iyor.
 food cook-prog-3sg.

“Deniz is cooking (by) *himself*/all by *himself*_{ALONE}/#all by *himself*_{WITHOUT.HELP}.”

Based on the contexts given in (30-33), *kendi başına* captures the components *without help* and *alone*. And *kendi kendine* captures *alone*, which entails *without help* under a lot of circumstances but not necessarily inherently so as (32) shows. And we’ve seen that _{VP}EM *kendi(-si)* is compatible with both interpretations.

Lastly, let’s look at the case in (16e) repeated here as (33a) using our new tools to attempt to isolate the meaning of the _{VP}EM *kendi(-si)*:

(33) a.Çocuk balkon-dan **kendi(-si)** düş-tü.
 child.nom balcony-abl **self(-3sg)** fall-past-3sg
 “The child fell off of the balcony himself.”

b.Çocuk balkon-dan **kendi kendi(-si)-ne** düş-tü.

child.nom	balcony-abl	self	self(-3sg)-acc	fall-past-3sg
"The child fell off of the balcony by himself _{ALONE} .				
c.#Çocuk	balkon-dan	kendi	baş-ı-na	düş-tü.
child.nom	balcony-abl	self	head-poss.3sg-dat	fall-past-3sg
"The child fell off of the balcony by himself _{WITHOUT.HELP} ."				

(33b-c) show that the $_{VP}EK$ in Turkish bears the meaning of *alone*, as in no other potential doer/causer being present to initiate the event. Recall that what (17) showed is also in line with this. To briefly remind the discussion under (17), it showed that the $_{VP}EK$ in an unaccusative clause such as (16e) is incompatible with an implied extra event participant as the causer of the event, and also incompatible with the patient argument itself to be rendered as a volitional agent/doer, however, compatible with reflexivization of the event structure in a way. Moreover, (18) showed us that the bare $_{VPEM}kendi(-si)$ isn't compatible with a volitional or agentive doer/causer reading. In this case, all the $_{VPEK}$ s in (16) would encode a causer or an event initiator. And the event initiator in (16e) would be co-referent to the undergoer of the same event, similar to how reflexives work ("x ended up causing xself to fall down"). It also might be the case that the way Turkish encodes event structure, specifically in terms of the difference between unaccusative and unergative events, has different properties compared to the process that's going on in English, or that the EK in Turkish is more underspecified in terms of thematic role requirements, or in terms of what it encodes in the event structure. Such an underspecificity would also cover cases like (28b) where the co-referent of the EK is inanimate. In that case, the potential analysis may lead to a "one EK to derive (them) all" type of unified account, at least in the case of Turkish (see Eckhardt 2001 for such a claim on *selbst* in German as an EK). Nonetheless, more data and research are required to arrive at clear-cut analyses of both the $_{VPEK}$ and the $_{DPEK}$ in Turkish.

4. Conclusion and questions for further exploration. In this paper, I argue that the anaphor *kendi* in Turkish not only functions as an emphatic marker apart from its reflexive anaphora form, but also there are two distinct readings available of that emphatic marker, in line with what's been observed with its counterparts in a very different language, English (Ahn 2010). I showed that most of the diagnostic restrictions that Ahn (2010) observes for the emphatic marker in English are also compatible with the EK in Turkish. However, I also document that the $_{VPEK}$ in Turkish is compatible with a non-agentive co-referent and hypothesized that the $_{VPEK}$ in Turkish merely requires an active participant in each event as opposed to requiring a volitional agent like its counterpart in English. A potentially fruitful next step might be doing an acceptability judgment task with more users of Turkish, and with sentences in more nuanced contexts to capture potential variation. A prosodic study could also be used to further explore the prosodic properties of the EK, especially to find out the difference between $_{DPEK}$ (15) and its counterpart in English in terms of morphophonological stress requirements.

Lastly, there are two bigger picture questions remaining: One is what exactly the EK denotes, and whether the $_{VPEK}$ and $_{DPEK}$ denote the same semantic function. Another question related to this is whether merge sites explain the difference in categorical behavior and interpretation, or whether we have two related but different linguistic items at hand. The second big picture question is why we observe a morpho-phonologic overlap between a reflexive anaphor and an emphatic marker in typologically unrelated languages? Note that this functional overlap is observed beyond Turkish and English, and observed even when reflexivity is expressed using strategies other than independent lexical items (Déchaine & Wiltschko 2017 i.a.). Both questions call for more new data, and more research.

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