

EĞİTİM yayınevi

Editör: **Doç. Dr. Merve Geçikli**

Dilbilimi

Alanında Uluslararası Araştırmalar - I

International Research in the Field of Linguistics

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ÖNSÖZ

Dilin kendisi kadar karmaşık ve çok yönlü bir disiplin olan dilbilim alanı, dünya çapında kültürleri, toplumları ve akademik araştırmaları birbirine bağlayan bir köprü görevi görür. "Dilbilimi Alanında Uluslararası Araştırmalar-I" adlı bu kitap, dil çeşitliliğinin zenginliğini ve insan bilişini, iletişimini ve kültürel kimliklerini anlamak için sahip olduğu sayısız çıkarımı aydınlatmayı amaçlayan akademik birikime bu bağlamda değerli bir katkı sağlamaktadır. Küresel dünya, her biri kendine özgü tarihi, yapısı ve toplumsal rolüyle dolu, benzeri görülmemiş bir dil ve lehçe karışımıyla karakterize edilir. Bu noktada, dilbilim salt akademik arayışın ötesine geçer; çok kültürlü etkileşimlerin karmaşıklıklarında gezinmek ve toplumsal uyumu teşvik etmek için olmazsa olmaz bir araç haline gelir. Bu kitap, akademisyenleri, öğrencileri ve meraklıları bir araya getirmek, çeşitli dilsel ve kültürel çerçeveler arasında diyaloğu ve iş birliğini teşvik etmek için tasarlanmıştır.

"Dilbilimi Alanında Uluslararası Araştırmalar- I" kitabının amacı yalnızca deneysel araştırma sunmak değil, aynı zamanda dilbilimsel araştırmanın teorik çıkarımları ve pratik uygulamaları etrafında düşünceyi teşvik etmektir. Kitap kapsamında, fonetik ve sözdiziminden söylem çözümlemesi ve nörodilbilime kadar uzanan konuları ele alınarak dil ile insan deneyiminin çeşitli boyutları arasında var olan karşılıklı etkileşimi sunmaktayız. Bu bağlamda, alanında önde gelen araştırmacılar ve yeni bilim insanları tarafından kaleme alınan bir dizi dikkatle düzenlenmiş bölüm aracılığıyla, hem yerleşik metodolojileri hem de yenilikçi yaklaşımları kapsayan çağdaş dilbilimsel düşüncenin bir panoramasını sunuyoruz.

Her bölüm, dünya çapında yürütülen dilbilimsel araştırmaların zenginliğinin bir kanıtıdır, daha az çalışılmış konular hakkında içgörüler sağlamaktadır. Dil ve kimlik arasındaki etkileşim özellikle vurgulanmakta ve okuyucuları dilin yalnızca düşüncelerimizi ve ifadelerimizi değil aynı zamanda kendimize ve topluma ilişkin anlayışımızı nasıl şekillendirdiğini düşünmeye davet etmektedir. Ayrıca, "Uluslararası Dilbilim Çalışmaları" disiplinler arası işbirliğine güçlü bir vurgu yapmaktadır. Dilbilim alan olarak antropoloji, psikoloji, bilgisayar bilimi ve eğitim gibi alanlarla kesişmektedir. Bu kesişimler odağında, bu kitap dilin çok sayıda faktörü etkileyen ve onlardan etkilenen dinamik bir güç olarak bütünsel bir anlayışını geliştirmeyi amaçlamaktadır. Bu çalışmadaki her bir bölüm, okuyucuları farklı araştırma alanları arasında bağlantılar kurmaya ve köprüler kurmaya teşvik eden daha büyük bir bulmacanın parçası olarak durmaktadır. Çalışmalar bünyesinde sunulan bulguların gelecekteki araştırmalar için bir sıçrama tahtası ve toplumda dilin rolü hakkında bilgilendirilmiş tartışmalar için bir katalizör görevi görmesini umuyoruz.

Sonuç olarak, “Dilbilimi Alanında Uluslararası Araştırmalar- I” dilin hayatımızdaki önemi hakkında devam eden sohbete katkıda bulunmayı amaçlamaktadır. Okuyucuları materyalle derinlemesine etkileşime girmeye, soru sormaya ve eleştirmeye ve dilbilimsel araştırmanın genişliği ve derinliğinde ilham bulmaya davet ediyoruz. Bu kitabı, dilbilimin büyüleyici dünyasında bir yolculuğa çıkma daveti olarak keşif ve iş birliği ruhuyla okuyucularımıza sunuyoruz.

Doç. Dr. Merve GEÇİKLİ

WH-CONGRUENCE IN TURKISH: CASE AND SCRAMBLING

Engin Evrim ÖNEM*

Abstract

This paper investigates the syntactic aspects of *wh*-congruence with particular emphasis on case marking and scrambling in Turkish, a language with a *wh*-in-situ nature. The research demonstrates that case markers and the position of the *wh*-question words serve as focus triggers that necessitate correspondingly case-marked and position-based answer words. The study establishes that true *wh*-congruence emerges through case harmony between the *wh*-question word and the focused element in the answer. Also, despite Turkish's flexible word order through scrambling, the research shows that positional symmetry between the *wh*-question word and the focus word remains intact along with the case-based *wh*-congruence principles, highlighting the syntactic effects of case marking and scrambling in Turkish grammar. The analysis reveals how this symmetry extends to structural positioning within question-answer pairs, illuminating the syntax-semantics interface in determining *wh*-congruence. These findings contribute to our understanding of focus marking and information structure in Turkish and suggest potential applications for analyzing question-answer congruency in other case-rich languages.

INTRODUCTION

Language is a social contract among people and effective communication relies on the ability of interlocutors to exchange information seamlessly, a process crucially dependent on congruity. In the broader sense, Matthews (2014) defines congruence as creating larger units by combining appropriate constituents under the linguistic prerequisites of a language. In other words, congruence is the compatibility relationship among linguistic structures. Since the linguistic structures of a language are bound to follow the rules of syntactic, semantic, and pragmatic components to form grammatical and meaningful utterances and/or sentences, congruence among linguistic structures is important, especially considering question-answer congruence.

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Question-answer congruency can be defined as the linguistic property whereby an answer directly and relevantly addresses the specific information sought by the question and it's about the appropriateness and fit between the question and the provided answer (Büring, 2012). As with many languages, Turkish has various types of questions. However, there is no consensus among linguists in terms of the types of questions. For instance, while Kornfilt (1997) lists them as polar, question word, and echo questions, Uzun (2006) classifies them as polar, *wh*-, and intonation questions. Özgen (2010), on the other hand, presents a list classifying questions in Turkish as polar, alternative, *wh*-, intonation, and echo questions. Given the complexities surrounding question classification in Turkish, it's important to examine how these various question types interact with the principle of question-answer congruency, particularly in the context of *wh*-questions due to Turkish's characteristic *wh*-in-situ syntax.

The term "*wh*-in-situ language" refers to a language where the question word stays in its normal position within the sentence instead of moving to another position as it does in other languages. The word order in a question is often very similar to that in a declarative sentence in *wh*-in-situ languages. Turkish is a *wh*-in-situ language "where no movement is required for any *wh*-phrase, in neither matrix nor embedded clauses, neither in single nor in multiple questions" (İşsever, 2009: 103). In other words, a *wh*-movement is required in other languages like English but the *wh*-question word and the answer word occupy symmetric positions in questions and answers in Turkish (Özgen, 2010; Aygen, 2007). Unlike languages that employ *wh*-movement, Turkish, as a *wh*-in-situ language, presents a unique environment for studying *wh*-congruence, where not only the case but also the symmetry in the positioning of *wh*-words in questions and answers plays a crucial role.

This paper investigates how word order and case marking affect the relationship between *wh*-questions and their corresponding answers in Turkish. Therefore, this paper focuses on *focus*, case marking, and scrambling in Turkish to provide a syntactic explanation for why certain question-answer pairs are grammatically considered congruent.

Focus in *wh*-congruence in Turkish

What an interlocutor aims to put forward during information exchange is the *focus* of a sentence or an utterance. In a broader sense, linguistically marked information that is especially informative or important within a given context is referred to as *focus*. Indeed, Trask (1999: 63) defines focus as "singling out some particular element of a sentence or an utterance as representing the most

important new information." Interestingly, the term *focus* has various linguistic references concerning the range of its scope. As Stevens (2017) highlights, the term *focus* is used to refer to the linguistic marking of contrast, question-answering status, exhaustivity, or discourse expectability. Languages have different linguistic means to 'single out' particular linguistic elements via syntactic positioning, focus markers, prosody, etc. For instance, in languages like Hungarian, the focus is added to a phrase by positioning it in the preverbal area, Japanese and Korean use specific morphological focus markers, and prosody is used in English.

The debate on focus and its syntactic position in Turkish revolves around the preverbal area, too. Syntactically, Erguvanlı (1984) identifies the immediate preverbal position as the sole location for focus, whereas Hoffman (1995) and Göksel & Özsoy (2000) argue that focus can occur within a broader preverbal area (the focus field), not just immediately before the verb. Regardless of the syntactic definition, the notion of focus is central to question-answer dynamics. However, studying focus in its broader syntactic sense is beyond the scope of this paper. Therefore, focus in this paper is limited to its role in question-answer pairs, where the focus is specifically prompted by the *wh*-question word.

As Stevens (2016) puts it, an abstract focus representation that sets up a context is present in questions and it restricts the focus to a set of appropriate noun phrases (NPs) where the answer is expected to be present. Similarly, Wagner (2012) argues that *wh*-questions prompt the speaker to identify which value, from a set of possibilities (even if not explicitly stated), makes the proposition true. This aligns with the common view (Hamblin, 1973, cited in Wagner, 2012:103) that a question's denotation is the set of its possible answers derived by substituting focused constituents with alternatives. Büring (2012: 448) considers the relationship between questions and answers as an interpretation of focus, where "the material in the answer that corresponds to the *wh*-constituent in the question." Similarly, according to the theory put forward by Hamblin (1973, cited in Rooth, 1992), a question determines a set of potential answers, including both true and false answers. Therefore, Rooth (1992: 89) suggests that question-answer congruence is achieved when the answer's focus corresponds to the trace left by the *wh*-question word. Consider the example question-answer set in (1) below.

(1)

Q: İnci ne-NOM al-dı?
İnci what-NOM buy-PST.3SG
'what did İnci buy?'

(a) İnci balık-NOM al-dı
İnci fish-NOM buy-PST.3SG
'İnci bought fish'

(b)*[3] İnci anne-NOM al-dı
İnci mother-NOM buy-PST.3SG
'İnci bought mother'

(c) balık
fish
'fish'

(d)* anne
mother
'mother'

The *wh*-question word in (1) limits the set of appropriate NPs to take the form 'İnci bought X'. Because of this limitation, a cooperative interlocutor is supposed to provide an answer from that set, which makes (a) a congruent but (b) an incongruent answer to the question (Q). In this context, the only truly informative piece of information is the specific value assigned to 'X', demonstrating the clear prompting influence of the *wh*-question word. What is more, as Schmitz (2008) claims, focus identifies the minimal information needed to answer the question under discussion, which also makes (c) congruent as it provides the minimum information needed while (d) is incongruent as it is outside the appropriate set of NPs required by the *wh*-question word.

The correlation between the *wh*-question word and the focus or the answer word is systematic and dynamic (Reich, 2001). The *wh*-question word in the question signals a single constituent or a *wh*-phrase based on the relationship between the focus and background structure in the question and the answer. Essentially, correct focus placement in the answer allows its semantics to properly link back to the question's meaning, treating the question's semantics as the antecedent for the answer's variable interpretation, and Rooth (1992) calls

[3] Incongruent, ungrammatical or unmeaningful sentences are marked with * throughout the text.

this a question-answer constraint. For instance, as presented in (2) below, the requirement for 'X' to be a person is set by the *wh*-question word *kim* (who) and limits the set of possible answers.

(2)

Q:	Kim	okul-a	git-ti?
	Who	school-DAT	go-PST.3SG
	'who went to school?'		
(a)	Çocuk	okul-a	git-ti
	kid	school-DAT	go-PST.3SG
	'Kid went to school'		
(b)*	Kapı	okul-a	git-ti
	Door	school-DAT	go-PST.3SG
	'Door went to school'		

In (2), only (a) is congruent as *çocuk* (kid) is the NP to satisfy the requirement of the *wh*-question word *kim* (who) for a person while (b) fails to provide an appropriate response as it breaks the question-answer constraint. In addition to that, as the NP *çocuk* (kid) is within the question-answer constraint and carries the minimum information needed, *çocuk* (kid) alone could also be accepted as congruent. As a result, it can be said that *focus* is prompted by the *wh*-question word and interlocutors are expected to choose from an appropriate set of answer words to meet the requirements of the *wh*-question word when responding to a question.

Case Marking in Turkish

Case is the system of morphological marking on NPs to indicate their grammatical functions and relationships with other linguistic constituents. In other words, it is the inflectional category showing a word's syntactic function (Bussmann, 1996). Unlike English, Turkish employs a rich case and case marking system, six cases and five case markers, for diverse syntactic and semantic purposes and they are shown in Table 1 below.

Table 1. Case Markers of Turkish

Marker	Case	Example
-	Nominative	okul-Ø okul-NOM 'school'
-(y)I	Accusative	okul-u school-ACC 'the school'
-(y)A	Dative	okul-a school-DAT 'to school'
-DA	Locative	okul-da school-LOC 'at school'
-DAn	Ablative	okul-dan school-ABL 'from school'
-(n)In-Im	Genitive	okul-un school-GEN 'of school'

For languages like English, contrastive focus might depend on other factors such as word order or intonation but a rich case system enables a language to have a flexible, if not free, word order. As case and case marking distinguish words syntactically and semantically (Trask, 1999), case markers make it easier to identify words syntactically and semantically in languages with relatively free word orders such as Japanese or Persian. Therefore, the rich case system facilitates flexible word order in Turkish by visibly identifying different functions of NPs (Göksel & Kerslake, 2005). For instance, accusative case marking has the sole function of marking the direct object and/or pointing to the specificity of an NP (Kornfilt, 1997), making it and the role it brings to the NP it is attached to easier to identify in Turkish.

In Turkish, as *wh*-question words prompt NPs, case markers can also be attached to *wh*-question words, as shown in (3) below.

(3)

(a) Ahmet ne-NOM sev-er?
Ahmet what-NOM like-PR.3SG
'what does Ahmet like?'

(b) Ahmet ne-yi gör-dü?
Ahmet what-ACC see-PST.3SG
'what did Ahmet see?'

(c) Ahmet nere-ye git-ti?
Ahmet where-DAT go-PST.3SG
'where did Ahmet go'

(d) Ahmet nere-de yaşı-yor?
Ahmet where-LOC live-PR.PROG.3SG
'where does Ahmet live in'

(e) Ahmet nere-den düş-tü?
Ahmet where-ABL fall-PST.3SG
'where did Ahmet fall from'

(f) Ahmet nere-nin öğrenci-si?
Ahmet where-GEN student-GEN.3SG
'where is Ahmet a student of'

As shown in (3) above, depending on the focus of the question, the *wh*-question word *ne* (*what*) bears various case markers and foreshadows an answer word from a set of appropriate answer repertoire by licensing a question-answer constraint.

Following this trait, as presented in (4), the prompting effect of a *wh*-question word and *wh*-congruence becomes easily visible.

(4)

Q: İnci ne-NOM gör-dü?
İnci what-NOM see-PST.3SG
'what did İnci see?'

(a) İnci kedi-NOM gör-dü
İnci cat-NOM see-PST.3SG
'İnci saw (a) cat'

(b)* İnci kedi-yi gör-dü
İnci cat-ACC see-PST.3SG
'İnci saw the cat'

Here in (4), the *wh*-question word *ne* (what) is in the nominative case and specifies the corresponding answer word to be in the nominative case as well. Therefore, even though both (a) and (b) are grammatically correct, only (a) satisfies the requirements of syntactic congruency. As expected, when the case markers concerning the *wh*-congruence change, the level of congruence also changes. For instance,

(5)

Q:	Dilek	ne-yi	sev-di?
	Dilek	what-ACC	like-PST.3SG
	‘what did Dilek like?’		
(a)	Dilek	kedi-yi	sev-di
	Dilek	cat-ACC	see-PST.3SG
	‘Dilek liked the cat’		
(b)*	Dilek	kedi-NOM	sev-di
	Dilek	cat-NOM	like-PST.3SG
	‘Dilek liked (a) cat’		

Here in (5), the *wh*-question word *ne-yi* (what-ACC) has two functions as mentioned above. First, it marks the direct object in the answer and second, it refers to the specificity of the NP in the answer (Kornfilt, 1997). Therefore, (a) meets the requirements of Q and is accepted as congruent while (b) is incongruent. The same situation can be observed for different *wh*-question words as shown in (6).

(6)

Q:	Ali	nere-de	yaşı-yor?
	Ali	where-LOC	live-PR.PROG.3SG
	‘where does Ali live in?’		
(a)	Ali	İstanbul-da	yaşı-yor
	Ali	İstanbul-LOC	live-PR.PROG.3SG
	‘Ali lives in İstanbul’		
(b)*	Ali	İstanbul-dan	yaşı-yor
	Ali	İstanbul-ABL	live-PR.PROG.3SG
	‘Ali lives from İstanbul’		

Here in (6), the *wh*-question word *nere-de* (where-LOC) is only congruent with (a) since the answer/focus word carries the locative case marker, appropriate to the specification prompted by the *wh*-question word in the question. On the other hand, although the same NP is present in (b), it is marked with the ablative case marker and is incongruent.

This *wh*-congruence relationship is particularly evident in *wh*-questions, where the case marker inherent in the *wh*-question word plays a crucial role in establishing congruency. Basically, for a question-answer set to be considered

congruent, a symmetry must exist between the question word and the corresponding answer or focus word. This symmetry is dictated by the case marking, ensuring that the grammatical role of the answer aligns with the expectations set by the question. While the propositional content of the answer can still be understood to some extent even with deviations, any violation of this case-based symmetry between the question word and the answer will inevitably lead to incongruency in Turkish. However, another syntactic process that might surpass this case-based symmetry in Turkish is scrambling.

Scrambling

Scrambling is a dynamic process causing a variety of orders of linguistic elements in a sentence without causing a change in the meaning of the sentence. It is an optional process of permuting the positions of linguistic constituents and is seen especially in languages utilizing a rich case-marking system since case marking allows the identification of linguistic constituents clearly wherever they occupy in a sentence (İşsever, 2009). In this sense, Turkish is a language where scrambling is permitted and it is easy to examine scrambling in basic Turkish declarative sentences in the sentences in Table 2 below. There, the basic proposition of the sentence is 'Birol feeds the bird' where *Birol* is the agent acting as the subject (S) while *bes-ler* (*feed*-PR.3SG) is the verb (V) and *kuş-u* (*bird*-ACC) is the direct object (O).

Table 2. Word Order Variations in Turkish

Sentence			Variation
Birol Birol	kuş-u bird-ACC	bes-ler feed-PR.3SG	SOV
kuş-u bird-ACC	Birol Birol	bes-ler feed-PR.3SG	OSV
Birol Birol	bes-ler feed-PR.3SG	kuş-u bird-ACC	SVO
kuş-u bird-ACC	bes-ler feed-PR.3SG	Birol Birol	OVS
bes-ler feed-PR.3SG	Birol Birol	kuş-u bird-ACC	VSO
bes-ler feed-PR.3SG	kuş-u bird-ACC	Birol Birol	VOS

In Table 2 above, excluding the focus, it is seen that subject, object, and verb can occupy any position in simple declarative sentences in Turkish syntactically. However, the canonical word order of Turkish is Subject-Object-Verb (SOV) in Turkish, which means the sentence-initial position is accepted as the unmarked position for subjects (Erguvanlı, 1984; Göksel and Kerslake, 2005) while the immediate preverbal position is held as the unmarked position

for direct objects (Aygen, 2007). Yet, regardless of the word order, the meaning holds throughout all variations.

When scrambling and *wh*-congruence meet, the effect of word order on question-answer congruency becomes more visible, as shown in (7) below.

(7)

Q:	Eren	ne-NOM	ver-di?
	Eren	what-NOM	give-PST.3SG
	‘what did Eren give?’		
(a)	Eren	anahtar-NOM	ver-di
	Eren	key-NOM	give-PST.3SG
	‘Eren gave (a) key’		
(b)*	Eren	ver-di	anahtar-NOM
	Eren	give-PST.3SG	key-NOM
	‘Eren gave (a) key’		
(c)*	anahtar-NOM	ver-di	Eren
	key-NOM	give-PST.3SG	Eren
	‘Eren gave (a) key’		

As can be seen in (7) above, the answer/focus word, *anahtar* (key), in (a), (b), and (c) correspond to the question word *ne* (what) but it is in different positions in each sentence. While the focus/answer word is in the preverbal position in (a), it is in the postverbal position in (b) and in the sentence-initial position in (c). Among these scrambled variations of the same sentence, only (a) is congruent for the Q as it hosts the focus/answer word occupying the same position as the *wh*-question word. Yet, when (a), (b), and (c) are considered independent of Q, all of them are grammatically correct due to the flexible word order of Turkish.

Considering the symmetrical positioning of the *wh*-question word in the question and the focus/answer word in the answer, one might question whether *wh*-congruence still holds even if other linguistic elements are scrambled while *wh*-congruence-related words remain in their positions. The process is demonstrated in (8) below.

(8)

Q: İrem ne-yi bil-ir?
İrem what-ACC know-PR.3SG
'what does İrem know?'

(a) İrem ceva-bı bil-ir
İrem answer-ACC know-PR.3SG
'İrem knows the answer'

(b)* bil-ir ceva-bı İrem
know-PR.3SG answer-ACC İrem
'İrem knows the answer'

Here in (8), the focus/answer word is in the same position as the *wh*-question word in both (a) and (b). However, due to reflecting the scrambled word order of *wh*-congruence, only (a) is congruent as it follows the word order of the Q but the word order in (b) is a deviation from the word order of Q. In other words, the sentence upon which the word order of the Q is reflected satisfies *wh*-congruence only. This reflection grants *wh*-congruence between the question and the answer when the *wh*-question word prompts the focus onto the subject of the sentence, as shown in (9) below.

(9)

Q: Kim masa-yı kur-du?
Who table-ACC lay-PST.3SG
'who laid the table?'

(a) Cem masa-yı kur-du
Cem table-ACC lay-PST.3SG
'Cem laid the table'

(b)* Cem kur-du masa-yı
Cem lay-PST.3SG table-ACC
'Cem laid the table'

When the question-answer set in (9) is examined, the positional symmetry between the *wh*-word *kim* (who) and *Cem*, the subject of the sentence and the answer word, can be seen in both (a) and (b). Yet, the scrambled word order of Q is followed in (a), and as a result, (a) satisfies the requirements of *wh*-congruence in this set while (b) does not.

The scrambled word order of the question surpasses the effects of canonical word order in *wh*-congruence in Turkish even when a question is peculiarly scrambled. For example,

(10)

Q:	gör-dü	İnci	ne-yi?
	see-PST.3SG	İnci	what-ACC
	'what did İnci see?'		
(a)	gör-dü	İnci	kedi-yi
	see-PST.3SG	İnci	cat-ACC
	'İnci saw the cat'		
(b)*	İnci	gör-dü	kedi-yi
	İnci	see-PST.3SG	cat-ACC
	'İnci saw the cat'		

As shown in (10), *ne-yi* (what-ACC) in Q specifies an accusative case marked noun phrase, and both (a) and (b) host accusative case marked *kedi-yi* (cat-ACC). In addition, the word order in both Q and (a) are deviations from the canonical word order while the word order in (b) follows the default word order in Turkish. However, only (a) is congruent for the Q in this set because the scrambled word order of Q is reflected in the word order of (a) even though both Q and (a) do not follow the default word order of Turkish unlike (c).

CONCLUSION

While Turkish exhibits a rich array of question types, the focus on *wh*-questions has allowed us to delineate the mechanisms by which case and word order contribute to this crucial aspect of question-answer coherence. By examining *wh*-questions and their corresponding answers, this paper reflected insights into the mechanisms of focus marking and information structure in Turkish. In conclusion, this paper has explored the relationship between *wh*-congruence from a syntactic point of view, focusing especially on case marking and scrambling in Turkish. Examples in the paper have demonstrated how the case marker inherent in the *wh*-question word acts as a crucial trigger for focus, prompting a specific case-marked answer and true congruency arises when symmetry is established between the case of the *wh*-question word and the case of the focused element in the answer. Furthermore, this paper has also demonstrated the role of scrambling in Turkish syntax and showed, despite the flexible word order, how the principles of *wh*-congruence remain robust. Even

when elements are scrambled, the underlying case and positional symmetry relationships between the *wh*-question word and the focused answer must be maintained to achieve congruency. This symmetry extends beyond simple case identity to encompass the structural positioning of these elements within the question and answer, highlighting the interplay between syntax and semantics in determining *wh*-congruence. This underscores the importance of case marking and positional symmetry as core components of Turkish grammar, influencing not only local agreement but also long-distance dependencies within question-answer pairs.

While the present paper has focused specifically on *wh*-questions, the principles outlined here may have broader implications for understanding question-answer congruency in other languages with rich case morphology. Future research could explore cross-linguistic variations in *wh*-congruence and investigate the role of other syntactic features, such as agreement, in establishing coherent question-answer pairs. Also, future research in Turkish could investigate how *wh*-congruence interacts with other syntactic phenomena, such as ellipsis or topicalization.

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