Several Turkish constructions have been described as sensitive to split intransitivity, including the impersonal passive, the -(y)ArAk gerund construction, the -mluş prenominal participle, etc. Under scrutiny, some Turkish intransitives turn out to have less variable behaviour in these constructions than others.

For instance, change-of-state verbs, e.g., eri- ‘melt’, patla- ‘burst’, sol- ‘fade’, etc., pass these tests most consistently as unaccusatives, and their acceptability is least influenced by the contextual features of their clause. Change-of-location verbs, on the other hand, e.g., gel- ‘come’, git- ‘go’, var- ‘arrive’, etc., pass both the impersonal passive and the -(y)ArAk gerund construction tests as unergative and only occur in -mluş prenominal participles (as unaccusatives) accompanied by certain (locative) adverbials.

(1) a. Impersonal passive:
   Aceleyle sekreterliğe gel-in-di.
   hastily secretary’s office.DAT come-PASS-PAST
   ‘Someone came in a hurry to the secretary’s office.’ (Acartürk 2005)

   b. -(y)ArAk construction:
   Ayşe cry-GL-ArAk come-PAST
   ‘Ayşe, while crying, came (to us).’ (Özkaragöz 1986)

   c. -mluş prenominal participle:
   istasyona güle oynaya var-muş misafir-ler
   station-DAT well joyfully arrive-mluş guest-PL
   ‘guests who have joyfully arrived at the station’ (Acartürk 2005)

This is unexpected from the perspective of Sorace’s (2000) hierarchy of intransitive verbs (based on perfect auxiliary selection in several Romance and Germanic languages), where change-of-location (i.e., directional motion) verbs, rather than change-of-state verbs are treated as core unaccusatives.

I argue that change-of-state verbs selecting inanimate arguments are most likely to have unaccusative behaviour in the three Turkish constructions due to their high degree of inherent telicity, as well as to the low degree of animacy of their arguments. In contrast, change-of-location verbs are less likely to have unaccusative behaviour in the three constructions, given the following:

(a) Change-of-location verbs in Turkish are less inherently specified for telicity than change of state verbs, and only become acceptable in the -mluş construction in combination with (path/source/goal) adverbials, etc. As suggested by Zeyrek (2004), Turkish is a ‘verb-framed’ language (Talmy 2000), which does not encode path information in the verb meaning, but rather in the meaning of the adverbial that accompanies it.

(b) In most of the cases, change-of-location verbs select [+human] subjects (characterized, therefore, by a high degree of animacy), which makes them good
candidates for the impersonal passive, as well as good candidates for co-occurring with unergatives in the -(y)ArAk construction.

References