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On the Semantic and Morphological Influence of Turkish on Balkan Slavic

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While it is undeniable that linguistic contact has resulted in semantic and syntactic borrowings among the unrelated or distantly related languages of the Balkan Peninsula, it appears to be the case that the semantic relationship between the di- and mig-pasts of Turkish and the definite and indefinite pasts of Balkan Slavic (i.e. Macedonian and Bulgarian) is not the one of lender/borrower which has commonly been supposed. It will be suggested in this paper that, contrary to widely held opinion (Conev 1910-1911:13-16, Mladenov 1929:217, Andrejev 1952:39-41, Mrčev 1958:210-212, Gogb 1960:34-38, Koneski 1965:148), the Balkan Slavic past indefinite and the Turkish mig-past do not share a marking for some nonaffirmative feature of the type reported, unattested, deduced, etc., but rather that the Balkan Slavic past definite and the Turkish di-past share a marking for affirmation which is responsible for the nonaffirmative chief contextual variant meaning of the other pasts, which must then be treated as unmarked or unmarkable. In addition to this, it will be demonstrated that the putative signaling of reported speech by the omission of the auxiliary from the third person of the past indefinite in Bulgarian and the omission of the emphatic-copulative particle -dir from the third person of the mig-past in Turkish are not semantic-morphological isomorphisms but rather two very different phenomena. The former is part of the general Balkan Slavic feature of total loss of the third person auxiliary, which in literary Bulgarian happens to occur frequently, but not consistently, in clauses of reporting. The latter involves a relatively newly arisen particle which can be attached to any person in many tenses and whose emphatic marking interacts with the chief contextual variant meaning of the mig-past and neutralizes it in the third, i.e. laxly marked, person. From all this it can be inferred that the use of the Balkan Slavic past indefinite for nonaffirmed events is not necessarily a calque on the similar use of the Turkish mig-past, but is instead a consequence of the actual marking of the past definite, which, while perhaps influenced by Turkish, could nevertheless have been a basically native development.

The traditional account of the evolution of the past tense system in Balkan Slavic during the period of Ottoman rule states that the forms descended from the Common Slavic perfect, which became the past indefinite, took on the meaning 'reported' under the influence of the Turkish mig-past and the use of the mig-past of 'be', 3sg jëmig, as an auxiliary with other participial forms. Since it is impossible to consider here all of the ramifications of a total comparison of these verbal systems, this paper must focus on the set of correspondences given in Table 1, which, while admittedly representing only a fragment of the systems, nonetheless displays the principle basis for the traditional viewpoint described above.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>3sg 'write'</th>
<th>MAC.</th>
<th>BULG.</th>
<th>TURK.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PAST DEFINITE (aorist)</td>
<td>napiša</td>
<td>napisa</td>
<td>yazdi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PAST INDEFINITE (aorist)</td>
<td>napišal</td>
<td>napisal e yazmıştır</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In Macedonian, the auxiliary has been completely lost in the third person of the past indefinite except in the northwestern dialects, e.g. Kumanovo, where it is generally retained, although it may be omitted in describing both reported and nonreported events (Vidoeski 1962:217-220, 231-234), Thus the only opposition which needs to be treated is that of past definite/past indefinite. As I have discussed this problem at length elsewhere (Friedman 1977:33-81), I will limit myself here to a few salient points. First of all, it should be noted that the terms definite and indefinite are being used only because they are the generally recognized traditional terms for these forms (Mac. minato opredeleno and neopredeleno 'past definite' and 'indefinite'). It can be seen that the distinction between these two sets of forms is not 'definite/indefinite' (although this is one of the contextual variant distinctions) from the fact that the former can occur with indefinite time expressions such as nikogas 'never', ponikogas 'sometimes', so godini 'for years', do neodamne 'until recently', and in other indefinite contexts (v. Friedman 1977:38-39, 148-149), while the latter can occur with definite time adverbs:

1. Kogam go vidoj, Mišo vo šest satot, toj veče gl kupi kurtite.
When I saw Mišo at six o'clock, he had already bought (def.) the tickets (Friedman 1977:38).

2. Jas sum stanal tokmu vo dva časot nokeška.
I got up (indef.) at exactly two o'clock last night (Lunt 1952:96).

Also, the past indefinite can occur in contexts which are clearly witnessed, affirmative, nonreported, nonresultative, etc., e.g. in subordination to clauses such as jas sum svetok deka 'I am a witness that', se kolon deka 'I swear that', znam deka 'I know that' (Friedman 1977:55) and in nonresultatives such as the following:

When we were (indef.) young, we used to play (indef.) by the river (Friedman 1977:54).

On the other hand, the past definite can occur with reference to
nonwitnessed events, as in the following example:

(4) No podeća se slućaju raboti za koji ne znae.  
But after that things happened (def.) which I didn't know about (Friedman 1977:150).

The one context which serves to clearly distinguish the past definite from the indefinite is one of anti-affirmation, i.e. doubt or disbelief, where only the past indefinite can occur:

(5) Se sonnevam/doma toj go *napravi/napravil toa.  
Ne veruvač  
I  { don't believe} that he did (*def./indef.) it (Friedman 1977:42-46).

On the basis of this material it can be seen that the crucial distinction between the Macedonian past definite and indefinite lies in the fact that the former is marked for affirmative status, where affirm 'implies conviction of truth and willingness to stand by one's statement because it is supported by evidence, one's experience, faith, or the like' (Webster's 1951:80), and status is the speaker's evaluation of the narrated event (Aronson 1977:11), while the latter is unmarked with respect to it.

The Turkish situation is similar to the Macedonian. Although in traditional Turkish grammar the mig-past is termed nakti 'reported', it is generally acknowledged that this term is inadequate (e.g. Ergin 1972:300). There is no general agreement, however, on the meaning of this form. The various views can be grouped into two broad classes characterized in the following manner: 1) the mig-past is marked for some category such as status, by which the speaker indicates that the narrated event was un witnessed, has been reported or inferred, appears to be true, may be doubtful, seemingly, reportedly, apparently, or probably has happened, etc., i.e. some form of non-affirmative; 2) the mig-past is marked for some aspectual, temporal, or resultative category by means of which the speaker indicates that the event took place at an indefinite time in the past, was completed in the past but has results in the present, directs the addressee’s attention to a point beyond the critical terminus of the action, etc., i.e. something which may be loosely termed perfect. The inability of the first set of meanings to account for all occurrences of the mig-past can be seen from the following examples:

(6) Ben őmrüde bir katre aşıza koyamamışım (Johanson 1971:300).  
In all my life I haven't put a drop in my mouth.

(7) Bu sabah hesabettim, küçüküm topağa düşeli tam yetmiş üç gece  
olmuş (Johanson 1971:264).  
This morning I counted; it has been exactly seventy-three nights since my child's burial.

The second set of meanings does not adequately account for nonresultative examples such as the following:

(8) Üç yüz yirmide dokuzum (Johanson 1971:280).  
I was born in 1904.

Nor can the second group of meanings account for the use of the migpast in narratives, e.g. in telling folktales. Given the irreconcilable differences in the uses of the mig-past, it appears that it is not a function as unmarked with respect to the di-past.

The di-past itself, traditionally called subbud 'witnessed', can be used for un witnessed actions:

(9) Evliya Celebi 1664 Nisanında..., Viyana’ya giderek epey müddet orada kaldı (Gâlib 194:382).  
Evliya Celebi, having gone to Vienna in April 1664, stayed there for a rather long time.

Similarly, one can say karim bir mektup vardi ‘my wife wrote a letter’ even if one is merely convinced of the truth of the event without any evidence (Johanson 1971:280). Another example of the facultative in the choice between di- and mig-pasts can be seen in a collection of Nasreddin Hodja stories in which two successive tales begin with the predicates vardi and varım ‘there was (di-/mig-)’.

It appears that the one type of sentence which does not permit a di-past is an antiaffirmative of the type cited in (5) above:

(10) İmamnıyorum ki o adam bunu yaprî/vepari.  
I don't believe that that man did (di-/mig) this.

Although it has been suggested before that the di-past is marked with respect to the mig-past, the marking has always been defined in terms of non-resultativeness (Higman 1970:53-55) or witnesslessness (Underhill 1976:170), whereas on the basis of the foregoing material, it would appear that the situation is the same as the one in Macedonian, i.e. the di-past is marked for affirmativity, and the mig-past is unmarked.

The Bulgarian past definite is identical to the Macedonian in terms of its marking, i.e. it is marked for the speaker's affirmation of the narrated event, but not for actual witnessing (Aronson 1967).

According to current, normative accounts of Bulgarian grammar, the past definite (also called the perfect) is marked for the omission of the third person auxiliary in the latter. Most scholars have posited an entirely separate, complete paradigmatic set of repeated forms on the basis of this omitted auxiliary. Since this opposition appears only in the third person, however, Aronson (1967) has maintained that it is neutralized everywhere else. The morphological expression of this opposition, i.e. its basis on the
presence or absence of the third person auxiliary, has been attributed to the use of the emphatic-copulative enclitic -dir in Turkish. The parallelism is illustrated for the singular of a verb meaning 'write' in Table 2 (cf., e.g., Mircev 1958:211):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BULGARIAN</th>
<th>TURKISH</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Past Indefinite</td>
<td>Reported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1sg</td>
<td>napisl sam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2sg</td>
<td>napisl si</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3sg</td>
<td>napisl e</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

According to traditional accounts, the ambiguity in the first two persons is disambiguated in the third in the following manner: napisal, like yazmiş, is specifically reported while napisl e, like yazmiştir, is not specified for source, conviction, etc. However, aside from the fact that the third person mig-past without -dir is clearly not marked for reportness (v. example [7]), the uses of the Turkish enclitic -dir and the Bulgarian auxiliary e/sam 'he, she, it is/they are' are quite different.

Bulgarian e/sam cannot be omitted in its copulative function and can only be used in the third person. Turkish -dir, on the other hand, is ordinarily omitted in its copulative function and can be suffixed to any person in a number of tense forms:

(11) Hayatımda onun kader çok az insani bekenmiş ve saymışdır (Johnson 1971:299).

In my life, I have valued and respected very few people as much as him.


[Following a description of an Istanbul street scene] You have entered Topkapi's famous Karabağ quarter.

(13) a. Şairim.

I am a poet.

b. Şairimdir.

I am surely (must be) a poet (Lewis 1967:139).

(14) a. Bilyorsunuz.

You know.

b. Bilyorsunuzdur.

You surely know (Lewis 1967:139).

The general function of -dir, although it can frequently be translated 'is', is to emphasize the termination of the predicate -- to say, in effect, "period" (Swift and Aţrâli 1966:220). This emphatic function can frequently be rendered by English adverbs such as surely and certainly. The use of this emphatic particle in a context which is already marked, e.g. a marked person, causes the doubly emphasized, i.e. in a sense overemphasized, statement to become less definite, as in (13b) and (13b). Nevertheless, this expressive effect is not always produced, as in (11) and (12). The fact that the 3sg mig-past + -dir has none of the nonaffirmative-variant meanings of the 3sg mig-past alone has been taken as an isolated phenomenon reflected in Bulgarian auxiliary usage.

If, however, the interaction of person and status with the particle -dir is taken into account, the explanation appears to be somewhat different. I have argued elsewhere (Friedman 1977:80-81, 112) that the hauptsbedeutung of the Macedonian past indefinite, which is the unmarked past, is some form of nonaffirmative such as reported, as can be seen from its use in the least marked contexts with the least marked person, i.e. the third. So in Turkish, the use of the emphatic -dir with the marked first two persons can produce a kind of overmarking, while this same emphatic quality of -dir when coupled with the unmarked, i.e. third, person of the unmarked, i.e. mig-, past serves to cancel that past's hauptsbedeutung which, like the Macedonian, is some type of nonaffirmative meaning, leaving only the meaning 'unmarked past'.

While the Turkish phenomenon consists of the addition of a particle, the Bulgarian one is the omission of an auxiliary. It appears to be part of the same phenomenon which occurs to varying degrees in Serbo-Croatian and Macedonian, as well as elsewhere in Slavic, viz. the loss of auxiliaries. The auxiliary can be omitted optionally from any person in Serbo-Croatian, especially in the third person, in emotive contexts, and in sentences with two time references (Bricklow 1954):


They say Peter came. (The form with the auxiliary would be došao je.)

In Macedonian and in West Bulgarian dialects, the third singular auxiliary is generally either omitted or preserved in all contexts, but with noticeable fluctuations in actual usage (v. Friedman 1977:125). In literary Bulgarian, which in this respect is based on the eastern dialects, the omission of the third person auxiliary is supposed to signal reported speech. Consider, however, the following examples:

(16) Taka štoto po edno vreme videk" se drukina mi otminala i se izgubila napred" (Andrejevsan 1930:60).

It was thus that I suddenly saw that my company had gone on and disappeared up ahead.

(17) Baj Ganjo ve varal ot Evropa... Az go vidjaz (Konstantinov 1973:91).

Baj Ganjo has returned from Europe... I saw him.

(18) Saboral se bexa o"devet" nela xora da prezduvut" denja...
true isomorphism. These examples were all translated from Turkish into Bulgarian or vice versa and show tense correspondences other than those which would be expected:

(21) ...acağa müsterisiniin beğenisinе umuyan herhangi bir kişi mıyı yarında diye alçak gönlülünlükle bana sordu: Co pan mluvı? (Kонстантинов 1972:66).
Co pan mluvı? — pita me toj smireno, kato misli e o storil njakoja greska protiv vkusa na Bag Ganja (Kонстантинов 1973: 31).
Co pan mluvı? What is the gentleman saying (Czech) he asked me humbly, thinking that 'Turk. perhaps' he had committed some offence to Bag Ganjo's (Turk. his customer)'s taste. (Turk. di-past/Bulg. past indefinite with auxiliary)

(22) Zayar nagalniki her halde Belgat'tan hisıl konf emirler almış olmalıdır ki, kaçaklarının hepsi iade etti.
Na vseki slučaj, Zajčarskištaj okolijski nacelnik tržabva da e polućil strogi zapovedi ot Belgrad, če vurnal vsički negalci (Галибов 1949:270).
In any case, the Zajčar (Bulg. regional) official must have received strict orders from Belgrade, so that he returned all of the runaways. (Turk. di-past/Bulg. past indefinite without auxiliary)

(23) Bu otuz be seneyi, dediğin gibi, ...gesımiler.
Kokto kaza, tezi trideset i pet godini te sa prekarali (Галибов 1949:114).
As he said, they got along for these thirty-five years. (Turk. mig-past without -dir/Bulg. past indefinite with auxiliary)

(24) Diğerlerine, nihayet başka bir şeere dükünlüler.
Maj-posle učitelite nemaliska drugo sredstvo (Галибов 1949:341).
Finally the teachers thought of a different means. (Turk. mig-past without -dir/Bulg. past definite)

The conclusions which can be drawn from the foregoing material are both diachronic and synchronic-contrastive. From a diachronic viewpoint, it appears that the usual presentation of the so-called reported forms in Balkan Slavic as caugen on the Turkish mig-past, and therefore a Balkan areal phenomenon should be modified to say rather that Balkan Slavic and Turkish share a common development whereby their past definites evolved into marked affirmative forms. (Y. Menges 1968:130) for Turkish. According to Wijk (1933), the Slavic development can already be seen in Old Church Slavonic, although Mircz (1958:21) adds examples to the contrary.) Along with this development, and perhaps to some extent due to it, the past indefinite — originally a perfect in all these languages -- developed into an unmarked past with a nonaffirmative chief contextual variant meaning, i.e. 'reported' in most instances, in contrast...
to the marked affirmative. These types of developments are seen in many languages and need not, therefore, be viewed as areal phenomena. The development of the perfect into an unmarked past is a recurring phenomenon in many languages, e.g., Russian, French, and German. Also, some sort of nonaffirmative contextual meaning in a perfect is attested or claimed in such widely separated languages as Lithuanian, Tadjik, Avar, and Estonian (Serebnennikov 1974:206-209) and was attributed by the Sanskrit grammarians to their perfect, although Whitney (1967:295-296) writes that the texts do not provide evidence of this at any period. The addition of -dir in Turkish and the omission of the third person auxiliary e/ha in Bulgarian, from both a diachronic and a synchronic-contrastive viewpoint appear to be quite different phenomena bearing convergent similarities. In the case of Turkish,-dir is a relatively newly arisen emphatic particle (from the 3sg aorist durur 'stands') which also serves in copula-like and auxiliary-like functions. Its combination with the third person mig-past has the effect of eliminating the hauptbedeutung of the mig-past and thereby the opposition -di/-mig. In the East Bulgarian dialects on which the literary language is partially based, the third person auxiliary in the past indefinite is in the process of being lost, as it is or has been in much of the rest of Balkan Slavic, but there is a definite tendency to eliminate it in nonaffirmative clauses. This produces the superficial similarities between Bulgarian and Turkish shown in Table 2. Thus it can be seen that in describing areal phenomena, it is necessary to examine the semantic markings of the grammatical categories and the total function of morphological units before drawing conclusions regarding historical development and questions of influence.

NOTES

1. The problem of the status of the South Serbian (Torlak) dialects, especially with regard to their verbal systems, is interesting but peripheral (v. Friedman 1977:125).

2. Cf. Friedman (1977:40) on the use of the term affirm to describe the basic meaning of the Macedonian past definite.

3. The other forms frequently cited in these comparisons are the Balkan Slavic present and the various imperfects and the Turkish present progressive in -iyor and the compound pasts using -iyor with the di- and mig-pasts of 'be'(3sg idal, imig). The comparison of these forms, however, raises a host of other problems not germane to this discussion, e.g., the relationship of these forms to the Turkish aorist in -r (genic zaman 'broad tense') and its compound forms with ida and imig, and their exclusion does not affect its validity.

4. This hauptbedeutung also appears as the only possible meaning in one of the more highly marked types of pluperfect (Friedman 1977:112).

5. True admiring usage is a distinct phenomenon in which the past indefinite is used to express surprise at a fact which was already true in the past, but which is (unexpectedly) perceived by the speaker at the moment of speech. This usage occurs almost exclusively with verbs meaning 'be' and 'have' and on rare occasion with other expressions of state. It is generally translated by a verb in the present tense, as in the example given below, and is clearly different from the omission of the auxiliary in any verb with a clearly past meaning:

(1) Toj bil dobar čovek! (Mac.)
Toj Dili dobar čovek! (Bulg.)
İyi adam imiş! (Turk.)
What a fine man he is!

6. Although the past indefinite e bilo is translated by the English present 'is', the former nevertheless retains its past marking, since it is referring to the ontological pastness of the report (v. Friedman 1977:71-72).

7. This suggests that there may be a widespread tendency not for perfects to develop into marked nonaffirmative forms but for native grammarians to make such a claim.

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