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EDITED BY

DONKA FARKAS
WESLEY M. JACOBSEN
KAROL W. TODRYS

CHICAGO LINGUISTIC SOCIETY
GOODSPEED 205
UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO
1050 E. 59TH STREET
CHICAGO, ILLINOIS 60637

On the Semantic and Morphological Influence of
Turkish on Balkan Slavic

Victor A. Friedman
University of North Carolina -- Chapel Hill

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 *miš-* pasts of Turkish and the definite and indefinite pasts of Balkan Slavic (i.e. Macedonian and Bulgarian)¹ 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, Andrejčin 1952:39-41, Mirčev 1958:210-212, Gošab 1960:34-38, Koneski 1965:148), the Balkan Slavic past indefinite and the Turkish *miš-* past do not share a marking for some nonaffirmative feature of the type *reported*, *unwitnessed*, *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.² 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 *miš-* 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 *miš-* past and neutralizes it in the third, i.e. least marked, person. From all this it can be inferred that the use of the Balkan Slavic past indefinite for non-affirmed events is not necessarily a calque on the similar use of the Turkish *miš-* 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 *miš-* past and the use of the *miš-* past of 'be', 3sg *imiš*, 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.³

TABLE 1

3sg 'write'	MAC.	BULG.	TURK.
PAST DEFINITE (aorist)	napiša	napisa	yazdı
PAST INDEFINITE (aorist) "perfect" "reported"	napišal	napisal e napisal	yazmıştir yazmış

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', *ponekogas* 'sometimes', *so godini* 'for years', *do neodamna* 'until recently', and in other indefinite contexts (v. Friedman 1977:38-39, 148-149), while the latter can occur with definite time adverbs:

- (1) Koga go vidov Mišo vo šest saatot, toj veke gi kupi kartite.
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 nošeska.
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 svedok deka* 'I am a witness that', *se kolnam deka* 'I swear that', *znam deka* 'I know that' (Friedman 1977:55) and in nonresultatives such as the following:

- (3) Koga sme bile mladi, sme igrali pokraj rekata.
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 podocna se slučija raboti za koi ne znaev.
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 antiaffirmation, i.e. doubt or disbelief, where only the past indefinite can occur:

- (5) Se somnevam } deka toj go *napravi/napravit toa.
Ne veruvam }
I { doubt } that he did (*def./indef.) it (Friedman 1977:
{ don't believe } 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 1977:14), while the latter is unmarked with respect to it.

The Turkish situation is similar to the Macedonian. Although in traditional Turkish grammar the miş-past is termed naklî '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 miş-past is marked for some category such as status, by which the speaker indicates that the narrated event was unwitnessed, 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 nonaffirmative; 2) the miş-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 miş-past can be seen from the following examples:

- (6) Ben ömrümde bir katre ağzıma koymamışım (Johanson 1971:300).
In all my life I haven't put a drop in my mouth.
(7) Bu sabah hesabettim, küçüğüm toprağa 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) Uç yüz yirmide doğmuşum (Johanson 1971:280).
I was born in 1904.

Nor can the second group of meanings account for the use of the miş-past in narratives, e.g. in telling folktales. Given the irreconcilable differences in the uses of the miş-past, it appears that it must function as unmarked with respect to the di-past.
The di-past itself, traditionally called şuhudî 'witnessed', can be used for unwitnessed actions:

- (9) Evliya Çelebi 1664 Nisanında, ..., Viyana'ya giderek epey müddet orada kaldı (Gäläbov 1949:382).
Evliya Çelebi, having gone to Vienna in April 1664, stayed there for a rather long time.

Similarly, one can say karım bir mektup yazdı '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 facultativity in the choice between di- and miş-pasts can be seen in a collection of Nasreddin Hodja stories in which two successive tales begin with the predicates vardı and varmış 'there was (di-/miş-)', respectively.

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) İnanmıyorum ki o adam bunu yaptı/yapmış.
I don't believe that that man did (di-/miş) this.

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

The Bulgarian past definite is identical to the Macedonian in terms of its marking, i.e. it is marked for speaker's affirmation of the narrated event, but not for actual witnessing (Aronson 1967). The Bulgarian past indefinite, however, must be treated separately. According to contemporary, normative accounts of Bulgarian grammar, the Bulgarian literary language has an opposition between the past indefinite (also called the perfect) and the past reported consisting of the omission of the third person auxiliary in the latter. Most scholars have posited an entirely separate, complete paradigmatic set of reported 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., Mirčev 1958:211):

TABLE 2

	BULGARIAN		TURKISH	
	Past Indefinite	Reported		
1sg	napisal sām		yazmışım	
2sg	napisal si		yazmışsın	
3sg	napisal e	napisal	yazmıştır	yazmış

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

Bulgarian e/sa 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 kadar çok az insanı beğenmiş ve saymışımdır (Johanson 1971:299).
In my life, I have valued and respected very few people as much as him.
- (12) Tophanenin meşhur Karabaş mahallesine girmişsinizdir (Johanson 1971:295).
[following a description of an Istanbul street scene] You have entered Tophane's famous Karabaş quarter.
- (13) a. Şairim.
I am a poet.
b. Şairimdir.
I am surely (=must be) a poet (Lewis 1967:139).
- (14) a. Biliyorsunuz.
You know.
b. Biliyorsunuzdur.
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 Ağralı 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 thereby doubly emphasized, i.e. in a sense overemphasized, statement to become less definite, as in (13b) and (14b). Nevertheless, this expressive effect is not always produced, as in (11) and (12). The fact that the 3sg miş-past + -dir has none of the nonaffirmative contextual variant meanings of the 3sg miş-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 hauptbedeutung of the Macedonian past indefinite, which is the unmarked past, is some form of nonaffirmativity 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. miş-, past serves to cancel that past's hauptbedeutung 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 (Grickat 1954):

- (15) Došao, kažu, Petar (Koneski 1965:148).
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 viděx" če družinata mi otminala i se izgubila napred" (Andrejčin 1938:68).
It was thus that I suddenly saw that my company had gone on and disappeared up ahead.
- (17) Baj Ganjo se värnal ot Evropa!... Az go vidjax (Konstantinov 1973:91).
Baj Ganjo has returned from Europe!... I saw him.
- (18) Sābrali se bexa ot"devet" sela xora da praznuvat" denja...

Hadži gajdi dvanata čobani ot" Balkana, deto letuva u nas"
(Andrejčin 1938:45).

People from nine villages had gathered to celebrate the day...
The two shepherds from the Balkan Mountains who were spending
the summer with us inflated bagpipes.

These examples are clearly not reported, or even deduced, they are
witnessed. Some scholars attempt to explain these usages as 'past
admiratives', i.e. expressions of surprise, or as 'perfects of
constatation', i.e. expressions of facts. These do not appear to be
consistent criteria, however, but rather ad hoc attempts to explain
usages which do not fit into the system as it has been codified.⁶
There are also clear examples of reports with the third person aux-
iliary:

- (19) ...sreštnaxme edna babička, nosi dva gäläba...Kupix gi -- kazva
...Momceto mi e bolno...
-- Ti -- kazva -- kakva si, ne ti li e sram...Daj sam gäläbite
...A kato ti e bilo bolno deteto -- kazva Xadži Petär -- nä
ti pari da go ceriš (Demina 1959:322n.36).
...we met a little old woman, she carries two pigeons...I bought
them -- she says...My boy is ill...[She intends to use the
pigeons in a superstitious healing rite.]
-- You -- he says -- what are you, aren't you ashamed...Give
the pigeons here...And since your child is ill -- says Hadži
Petär -- here is money for you to cure him.⁶

- (20) A kogato sinät" säobšti, če si e nameril" kvartira... (Andrej-
čin 1938:44)

But when the son announced that he had found himself an apart-
ment...

A more likely explanation of the East Bulgarian phenomenon on
which the literary codification is supposed to be based is the
following: the omission of the auxiliary in the third person in
East Bulgarian (and in the literary language as it is actually used
-- as opposed to the prescriptions for its use) is part of the gen-
eral Balkan Slavic phenomenon, but unlike West Bulgarian and Macé-
donian, where it is more or less either consistently omitted or
consistently preserved depending on the particular dialect, the
situation is more like that in Serbo-Croatian, i.e. there is a ten-
dency to omit the auxiliary in certain contexts. As was mentioned
above, the omission in Serbo-Croatian tends to occur in certain
semantic and syntactic environments (e.g. third person, emotive,
dual time reference). It could be that in East Bulgarian the aux-
iliary is more likely to be omitted in subordination to verbs of
reporting, and by extension in contexts where a report is involved,
but this constitutes a simple deletion rule rather than a separate
paradigmatic set expressing a distinct grammatical category.

The last four examples are intended to illustrate the fact that
although the Bulgarian and Turkish verbal systems display the su-
perficial similarities alluded to in Tables 1 and 2, there is no

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) ...acaba müsterisinin beğenisine uymayan herhangi bir iş mi
yaptı diye alçak gönüllülükle bana sordu: Co pan mluvi?
(Konstantinov 1972:66).
Co pan mluvi? -- pita me toj smireno, kato misli če e storil
njakoja greška protiv vkusa na Baj Ganja (Konstantinov 1973:
51).
Co pan mluvi?[What is the gentleman saying (Czech)] he asked
me humbly, thinking that [Turk. perhaps] he had committed
some offence to Baj Ganjo's (Turk. his customer's) taste.
(Turk. di-past/Bulg. past indefinite with auxiliary)
- (22) Zayçar naçalniki her halde Belgat'tan [sic] kat'f emirler
almış olmalıdır ki, kaçakların hepsi iade etti.
Na vseki slučaj, Zajčarskijat okolijski nacalnik trjabva da
e polučil strogi zapovedi ot Belgrad, če värnal vsicki
begalci (Gäläbov 1949:270).
In any case, the Zajçar [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 beş seneyi, dediğin gibi, ...geçirmişler.
Kakto kaza, tezi trideset i pet godini te sa prekarali (Gäläbov
1949:114).
As he said, they got along for these thirty-five years.
(Turk. miş-past without -dir/Bulg. past indefinite with auxil-
iary)
- (24) Öğretmenler nihayet başka bir çare düşünmüşler.
Naj-posle učitelite namislixa drugo sredstvo (Gäläbov 1949:341).
Finally the teachers thought of a different means.
(Turk. miş-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 calques on the Turkish miş-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.
(V. Menges [1968:130] for Turkish. According to Wijk [1933], the
Slavic development can already be seen in Old Church Slavonic,
although Mirčev [1958:211] adduces 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 contex-
tual 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 (Serebrennikov 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.⁷ The addition of -dir in Turkish and the omission of the third person auxiliary e/sa 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 miş-past has the effect of eliminating the hauptbedeutung of the miş-past and thereby the opposition -di/-miş. 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 miş-pasts of 'be' (3sg idi, imiş). 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 (geniş zaman 'broad tense') and its compound forms with idi and imiş, 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 admirative 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 from any verb with a clearly past meaning:

- (i) Toj bil dobar čovek! (Mac.)
 Toj bil 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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