

From Reality into Wishful Thinking: A Non-Perfective Use of a Perfective Participle in Azeri

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“Imprecative illocution” is defined as associated with curses (Hengeveld 2004: 1190). Typologically, it is expressed by forms related to imperative or future modality (Sadock & Zwicky 1985: 163–164).

Unlike some Turkic languages (Abish 2014: 58–59, Jankowski 2010: 149), Azeri does not possess a designated imprecative mood. However, Azeri perfective participles present a peculiar semantic use, arguably not found in related languages and non-addressed in any academic literature, i.e. curses (1) or curses disguised as blessings (2):

(1) Azeri (AA)

<i>Ciyər-i</i>	<i>yan-mış</i>	<i>Zərifə</i>	<i>bayaq</i>	<i>çix-anda</i>
liver-POSS:3	burn-PTCP:RES	PN	earlier	exit-TEMP
<i>çaynik-i</i>	<i>də</i>	<i>öz-ü-ylə</i>		<i>apar-ib-mış</i> .

teapot-ACC ADD own-POSS:3-with carry-PRF:3-EVID

lit. ‘It looks like Zərifə, her liver BURN, took the teapot with her when she went out earlier.’

(2) Azeri (MQ)

<i>Axır</i>	<i>vaxt-lar</i>	<i>bu</i>	<i>Allah</i>	<i>saxla-mış</i>	<i>Hacı</i>
end	time-PL	this	God	keep-PTCP:RES	PN
<i>qoy-m-ur</i>	<i>gecə-lər</i>		<i>yat-mağ-a.</i>		

put-NEG-IPFV:PRS:3 night-PL sleep-INF-DAT

‘Lately this Hacı, God KEEP (him) alive, has not been letting (us) sleep at night.’

The suffix *-mış* has been attested in Turkic languages already in eighth-century inscriptions (Tekin 1968). Though the use of *-mış* as a predicative suffix is equally attested in the earliest records of Turkic, it is generally believed that its primary functions were attributive (Baskakov 1971). Participles derived with *-mış* are historically found in languages as distant from one another as Yakut, Chagatai, Cuman and Western Oghuz, including Azeri. In Turkish (and Azeri, where they behave similarly), they are described as indicating “an attribute that has been actualized at a point in the past distant from the here-and-now” (Bangoglu 1974: 272 via Slobin & Aksu 1982: 188) and could be qualified as resultative. Their attributive use, however, shows some semantic-syntactic restrictions:

- they can only encode a resultant state, including if it is semantically inherent to them:

(4) Turkish (Slobin & Aksu 1982: 188)

<i>öl-müş</i>	<i>adam</i>
die-PTCP:RES	man

‘a/the dead man’

- if the verb refers to a continuing process, a *-mış* participle is only acceptable if all the elements of its basic argument structure are expressed:

(5) Turkish (Slobin & Aksu 1982: 189)

a. * *öğren-mış adam* b. *dil_bilimi öğren-mış adam*
 learn-PTCP:RES man linguistics learn-PTCP:RES man
 'a/the man who has learned' 'a/the man who has learned linguistics'

- if the verb is transitive and conveying a change of state, a *-mış* participle can only be used alone in the passive:

(6) Turkish (Slobin & Aksu 1982: 189)

kır-il-mış bardak
 break-PSV-PTCP:RESL glass
 'a/the broken glass'

While the imprecative modal participles in Azeri seem to respect these restrictions, they present a deviation from the typological tendency of expressing curses through non-perfective aspecto-modal categories, and from the semantics of a perfective and result-oriented action which unites *-mış* participles in the Turkic languages which possess them. Azeri has seemingly selected these participles to relativise objects of verbs which as finite predicates would feature a mood rather than an aspect. This presentation will attempt to reconstruct this unusual grammaticalisation path.

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