Linguistic Minorities in Turkey and Turkic-Speaking Minorities of the Periphery

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Miş and *miʃimu*:
An instance of language contact in Cyprus

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Abstract

This paper explores the syntactic and semantic similarities between Cypriot Turkish {-mIş}/{-(y)mIş} and its Cypriot Greek counterpart *miʃimu*. We show that the aspectual function(s) of the verbal suffix *mIş* are restricted in Cypriot Turkish and that both copular {-(y)mIş} and the verbal suffix {-mIş} can be treated as a discourse particle indexing a particular type of illocutionary force (dissociative). Cypriot Greek *miʃimu*, a clear case of borrowing, only displays the dissociative function; it is therefore tempting to argue that this dissociative marker may have been re-borrowed into Cypriot Turkish as a free morpheme with a purely dissociative force – thereby pointing to language (or, in this case, dialect) contact as a reciprocal relation.

1. Introduction

The aim of this paper is to explore the semantic differences between the Standard Turkish (ST) and the Cypriot Turkish (CT) verbal suffix {-mIş} and the copular form {-(y)mIş} and to relate these to the use of *miʃimu* in the contact language of CT, Cypriot Greek (CG). It has long been noted in the literature that the copular form {-imiş} in CT "as a marker of indirectivity […] is used as a discourse pragmatic element focusing on what is considered important in a sentence" (Demir 2003: 274). However, CT {-imiş} (and also the verbal suffix {-mIş}) may function *both* as an evidential/indirectivity marker and as a dissociative discourse particle (denoting doubt or incredulity), exactly like its GC counterpart *miʃimu*. It is therefore particularly interesting to try and trace the trajectory of this development and its theoretical implications for theories of language contact.

2. Standard Turkish {-mIş} and the copular form {-(y)mIş}

As is well-known, the ST verbal suffix {-mIş} is a tense/aspect/modality marker, while the ST copula {-(y)mIş} does not encode tense or aspect. Göksel & Kerslake note that "the verbal suffix -*mIş* [...] also marks relative past tense and perfective aspect, and the copular suffix -*(y)mIş* [...] is purely a marker of evidential modality" (Göksel & Kerslake 2005: 355). Similarly, Johanson observes that "das nichttemporale *imiş* des Türkeitürkischen signalisiert in pertinenter Weise die modale *inferen-*

tielle Idee, die beim temporalen *miş* als nichtpertinente Nuance auftritt" (Johanson 1971: 64).

Indeed, {-mIş} may mark information-based evidentials, as in examples (1–3) below:

1.   (a) (Ali, to Gül):   *Bahçeye   bir   meşe ağacı   diktim.*
                              garden-DAT an   oak tree-NC   plant-PAST.1SG
                              'I've planted an oak tree in the garden.'

      (b) (Gül, to Orhan):   *Ali   bahçesine   bir   meşe ağacı dikmiş.*
                              Ali   garden-3SG.POSS.DAT an   oak tree-NC plant-EV/PF
                              'Ali has apparently planted an oak tree in his garden.'
                                                          (Göksel & Kerslake 2005: 356)

2.   *Ayşe'nin   annesi   biraz rahatsızmış.*
      Ayşe-GEN   mother-NC   unwell-EV.COP
      'It seems that Ayşe's mother is not very well.'
                                                          (Göksel & Kerslake 2005: 357)

3.   *Sözde   inatçıymışım.*
      supposedly obstinate-EV.COP.1SG
      'I am supposedly obstinate."
                                                          (Göksel & Kerslake 2005: 357)

According to Plungian (2001), evidential values can be classified into "reflected" and "mediated" evidence; the former (reflected evidence) involves inference, while the latter (mediated evidence), which includes quotatives, hearsay and third-hand knowledge, may overlap with the dissociative/dubitative function (cf. example 3 above). Evidential forms with {-mIş} in ST may thus allow for a dissociative reading, our recasting in more contemporary pragmatic terms of what the literature terms "irony", "scorn", "psychological distance" etc. (cf. Gül 2009, Yavaş 1980), as a pragmatic extension of its indirective meaning (be it 'inferential' or 'mediated'). However, it seems that this dissociative/dubitative meaning can occur in ST only when the copular form is used.

3. The verbal suffix {-mIş} in Cypriot Turkish

In CT there is no indirective meaning (either 'inferential' or 'mediated') in the verbal suffix {-mIş}. The 'mediated' statement of example (1b) is typically expressed by the past tense suffix in {-dI}, as in example (4) below:

4.   *Ali bahçesine bir meşe ağacı dikti.*
      'Ali has (apparently or not) planted an oak tree in his garden.'

Due to the diglossic situation {-mIş} may now be used as a present perfect/evidentiality marker (subject to sociolinguistic constraints). However, in narration and quotations referring to a past event, {-dI} is still widely used (cf. Demir 2003: 270 and Demir & Johanson 2006: 7–8).

Indirective grammatical categories existed already in Old Turkic (Erdal 2004: 272–275, Johanson 2000: 61) and are to be found in all other Turkic languages (Johanson 2000, Johanson 2003). Here we are dealing with a development in which possibly the contact language, Cypriot Greek – where the present perfect is not expressed with surface morphology (see section 7 below) – could have played a role. This assumption is strenghtened by the fact that the Turkish dialects of Trabzon (Brendemoen (1999) and Rhodes (Kaili et al. 2009: 404)), under a similar contact situation with Greek, display the same effects.

In contrast, CT {-mIş} exclusively encodes the dissociative/dubitative function, as can be seen, for instance, in example (5) below:

5. *Lefge'ye   gidmiş.*
   Lefke-DAT   go-DISS/PF
   '(S)he went to Lefke (but I doubt it).'

Obviously, CT {-mIş} may well have ironical connotations, as in example (6):

6. *Beyenmemişiŋ   da   yermişiŋ!*
   like-NEG.DISS/PF.2SG   DC (discourse connective)   eat-PRES.DISS.COP.2SG
   'Hey you didn't like it, but still you eat it (up)!'

Of particular interest are data such as example (7), where the attachment of the copular form to the suffix – resulting in an ostensible doubling of {-mIş} – may emphasize the dubitative meaning (a function claimed also for ST by Gencan 1966: 238):

7. *Lefge'ye   gidmişmiş.*
   Lefke-DAT   go-DISS.DISS.COP
   '(S)he went to Lefke (but I very much doubt it).'

A difference to ST surfaces however when {-dI} is attached to the suffix {-mIş}, because CT {-mIş} preserves the indirective meaning, whereas the same suffix in that morphological slot in ST indicates only relative past tense:

8. *Lefge'ye gidmişdi.*
   '(S)he went to Lefke (but I doubt it).'
   [ST: Lefke'ye gitmişti '(S)he had gone to Lefke.']

As CT {-dI} has taken over the different functions of ST {-mIş} (as can be seen in example 4 above), so the function of ST {-mIştI} is almost exclusively taken over by {-dIydI} in CT; see example (9) below:

9. *Lefge'ye giddiydi.*
   '(S)he had gone to Lefke.'

4. The copular form {-(y)mIş} and its variants in Cypriot Turkish

As can be seen from examples (6) and (7) above, the tenseless copular form also assumes a dissociative function, although it can sometimes involve an evidential/quotative connotation:

10.   a. *Koşarsaymışıŋ*   *zayıflayacaŋ.*
          run-PRES.COND.EV/DISS.COP.2SG   slim down-FUT.2SG
          'If you run (said the doctor) you will slim down.'
          Or: 'If you run (said the doctor, but will you really do that?) you will slim down.'

Moreover, {-(y)mIş} can also surface in the apodosis of the given conditional phrase, e.g.:

       b. *... zayıflayacagmışıŋ.*
          ... slim down-FUT.EV/DISS.COP.2SG
          '...you might perhaps slim down.'

The CT copula has become a free morpheme with a relatively free syntactic position:

11.   a. *Lefge'ye imiş/'yeymiş giddi.*
       b. *Lefge'ye imiş/'yeymiş gidmiş.*

12.   *Lefge'ye imiş gidmiş(miş).*

13.   *?Miş Lefge'ye giddi.*

So far, it seems that CT {-mIş} both as a suffix and as a copula is semantically partly different from ST, and that the copula has undergone a further syntactic development, evolving into a free morpheme with the allomorphs {miş} (with phonological restrictions) or {imiş}.

5. The Cypriot Greek dissociative marker *miʃimu* and its variants

In CG, *miʃimu* and a number of variants, including *miʃi, imiʃ* and even *miʃteti* are available. The former is the most common one, while the last three are considered basilectal. The last one, *miʃteti*, is on its way to full obsolescence (Tsiplakou et al. in prep).

The {+mu} in the more common variant *miʃimu* is typical of many similar Turkish loanwords in both Standard and Cypriot Greek; cf. CG *percimu* 'perhaps/if only' < *belki* (CT *belkim*), *atʃapis mu* 'I wonder' < *acab(a)*, *aferimu* 'well done' < *aferim.*

The syntactic/semantic properties of CG *miʃimu* and its variants are much simpler than those of their ST or CT equivalents: they are sentence adverbs which only have a dissociative/dubitative function, and their syntactic position is free:

14.   *míʃimu   emílisen   o   jórkos   tis   stavrúl:as*
       DISS   spoke-3SG   the-NOM   George-NOM   the-GEN   Stavroula-GEN

15.   *emílisen   míʃimu   o   jórkos   tis   stavrúl:as*
       spoke-3SG   DISS   the-NOM   George-NOM   the-GEN   Stavroula-GEN

16.   *emílisen   o   jórkos   míʃimu   tis   stavrúl:as*
       spoke-3SG   the-NOM   George-NOM   DISS   the-GEN   Stavroula-GEN

17. | *emílisen* | *o* | *jórkos* | *tis* | *stavrúl:as* | *míʃimu* |
    | spoke-3SG | the-NOM | George-NOM | the-GEN | Stavroula-GEN | DISS |

'George spoke to Stavroula—yeah, right!'

Whether *miʃimu* has narrow scope over a particular constituent or not depends largely on whether the constituent displays intonational prominence rather than on constituent order and the syntactic position of *miʃimu* (cf. Tsiplakou 2005).

6. The syntactic position of CT {miş/imiş} and focalization

Demir (2003) notes that CT {(i)miş} "emphasizes the element it is attached to", depending on its syntactic position:

18. a. *Sonundamış aşkını ilan etdi.*
    'He *finally* declared his love to her.'

    b. *Sonunda aşkınımış ilan etdi.*
    'He finally declared *his love* to her.'

    c. *Sonunda aşkını ilanmış etdi.*
    'He finally *declared* his love to her.'

    d. *Miş sonunda aşkını ilan etdi.*
    'He finally declared his love to her (as I have heard/learned).'

(Demir 2003: 270–271)

We would however like to argue that adjacency to {(i)miş} does not necessarily mark the adjacent element as the focus. In fact, in CT the co-occurrence of {(i)miş /mIş} and {da}, as in example (19) below, is possible:

19. | *Gelecegmiş* | *da (mış)* | *alsın(mış)* | *seni.* |
    | come-FUT.DISS | DC (DISS) | pick up-SUBJ(DISS) | you-ACC |

'(S)he will come (I doubt it) and pick you up.'

In example (19), focus marking is obviously carried out by {da} rather than by {(i)miş/mIş}. The ST multipurpose clitic {dA} is usually characterized as a discourse connective (additive) or adversative conjunction ('and, too, but'), but also as a focalizer, topicalizer and intensifier (Göksel & Kerslake 2005: 441–442 and Göksel & Özsoy 2003: 1144). Concerning the semantics of focus and the semantics of *dA*, Göksel & Özsoy (2003: 1159) argue that "[w]hereas focusing evokes alternatives, the function of *dA* is to assert that one of these alternatives is true". CT {da} (without phonological variation) displays similar semantic properties as to the assertion (or rejection) of truth but, in contrast to its ST equivalent, it can be linked to the adverbial *miş*, thereby highlighting the dubitative meaning of the clause, but without taking scope over any particular constituent. Note that syntactic variation does not appear to alter the focus properties; see example (20) below:

20. | *Gelecegmiş* | *da (mış)* | *alsın* | *seniymiş.* |
    | come-FUT.DISS | DC (DISS) | pick up-SUBJ | you-ACC.DISS |

'(S)he will come (I doubt it) and pick you up.'

CT {da} can also be used to underline the contrast between the two propositions, as in example (21), a variant of example (10a) above:

21. *Koşarmış   da mış   zayıflamazmış.*
    run-PRES.DISS   DC DISS   slim down-NEG.PRES.DISS
    '(S)he is supposed to run (but I don't believe it), but (s)he does not slim down!'

In some cases, however, the insertion of the discourse connective {da} seems to narrow the scope of the dubitative {mIş} on the preceding constituent:

22. *Lefge'ye   da mış   giddi /   gidmiş.*
    Lefke-DAT   DC DISS.COP   go-PAST.3SG /   go-DISS/PF
    '(S)he went allegedly to *Lefke* (but I think (s)he went to another place).'

CT {da} may also emphasize further the statement marked with {mIşʲ}, as in example (23), which combines the dissociative and the admirative function:

23. *Arabayı almışmış   da mış!*
    car-ACC   buy-DISS/PF.DISS.COP DC DISS
    '(S)he bought a car (imagine that, I can't believe it, (s)he always used to say (s)he had no money etc.)!'

Interestingly, in CG it is also not the position of *míʃimu* that is responsible for specific focus/scope effects, but rather the placement of other focalizers, e.g. *tʃe* 'and', 'too' in (24) below (on SG *ce* 'and' as a focalizer see Tsiplakou 2005):

24. *en   epástinen,   tʃe   kámni   mu   tʃe   ðíeta   míʃimu*
    NEG   slim-down-PAST.3SG   and   make-3SG   me-ETH   and   diet-ACC DISS
    '(S)he hasn't lost any weight, and (s)he's on a diet, too—yeah, right!'

7. Discussion

To bring together the strands of analysis presented above, we can argue that, the effects of diglossia between CT and ST notwithstanding, the general picture seems to be that the inferential/evidential function of ST {-(i)mIş} (both as a verbal suffix and as a copula) is not the primary one in CT. In contrast, the dissociative function is prevalent in both CT {-(i)mIş} and CG *míʃimu.* Moreover, the syntactic placement of the dissociative form {(i)mIş} is more or less free in CT, just like that of its CG counterpart; cf. also the availability of a nominalized *mĭš-mĭš* 'rumour, gossip' in several Central Asian Turkic languages (reported in Johanson 1971: 66). The assumed focalizing function of {-(i)mIş} may rather be seen as a byproduct of its combination with *da* and focal intonation; it is not clear that {-(i)mIş} itself induces focus/narrow scope effects.

Crucially, the aspectual function of the ST verbal suffix {-mIş} as a marker of present perfect and past perfect tense is unavailable in CT, again diglossic effects notwithstanding (cf. examples 8 and 9 above):

25. a. ST   *Lefke'ye gitmiş.*
            '(S)he has gone to Lefke.'

     b. CT   *Lefge'yeymiş giddi/Lefge'ye gidmiş(miş).*
            '(S)he went/has gone to Lefke (but I very much doubt it).'

26. a. ST   *Lefke'ye gitmişti.*
            '(S)he had gone to Lefke.'

     b. CT   *Lefge'ye giddiydi.*
            '(S)he had gone to Lefke.'

The unavailability of morphologically marked present perfect and past perfect tenses
in the contact language, CG (Melissaropoulou et al. 2013), may have played a role
here, as well as the unavailability of *affixal* morphological marking of epistemic
modalities in both Standard and Cypriot Greek:

27. a. SG   *éçi   pái   stin   páfo*
            have-3SG   gone   to the-ACC   Paphos-ACC
            '(S)he has gone to Paphos.'

     b. CG   *epíen   is tin   páfon*
            go-PAST.3SG   to the-ACC   Paphos.ACC
            '(S)he went/has gone to Paphos.'

Bearing all the above in mind, we may speculate that the ST verbal suffix {-mIş}
has lost its aspectual function in CT either as a result of contact with CG, where a
morphological non-periphrastic past tense encodes both past and perfect tenses, or
due to an extension of the function of the copular {-(y)mIş} as a pure marker of il-
locutionary force (dissociative) onto the verbal suffix {-mIş}. This may have led to
the gradual 'taking over' of the latter by the former, or to the fusing of both into a
discourse particle marking a particular illocutionary force (presumably both pro-
cesses may also work *in tandem*).

   CG may well have copied CT {-(y)mIş} (assuming that copying a copula is more
feasible as a grammatical operation than copying a suffix). Borrowed {-(y)miş} is
treated as a discourse particle and the dissociative function is selected; note that the
dissociative function may entail 'intermediate' modalities such as 'hearsay', eviden-
tial, indirective, etc. The CG dissociative marker may then have been reborrowed
into CT as a free morpheme with a purely dissociative illocutionary force.

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